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।। अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनकारिकासञ्चयः ।।

AKṢARA-PURUṢOTTAMA-
DARŚANA-KĀRIKĀ-SAÑCAYA

Explanation, Translation, And Notes

By

Ācārya Brahmasetudas Swami

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राष्ट्रहिताय संस्कृतम्

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अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनकारिकासञ्चयः

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By

Acarya Brahmasvetudas Swami

प्रधानसंपादकः

आचार्यः श्रीनिवासः वरखेडी

कुलगुरु

संपादकः

आचार्यः मधुसूदनः पेन्ना

संचालकः संशोधन—प्रकाशनविभागः



कविकुलगुरु संस्कृत

कविकुलगुरु—कालिदास—संस्कृत—विश्वविद्यालयः

रामटेकम्, जि. नागपुरम् (महाराष्ट्रम्)

एवं

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एस. के. आफॉसेट, दिल्ली

PREFACE

It is indeed a matter of great pleasure and pride for Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Ramtek to have this rarest opportunity of hosting the 50th session of All India Oriental Conference at Nagpur. This AIOC-50th session at Nagpur will be forever remembered by all as the year 2019 also happens to be the year of Centenary Celebration of AIOC. The premier objective with which the great scholars of yester years had contemplated and established this national academic event called All India Oriental Conference has been achieved through these years with scores of young scholars contributing significantly to the treasure house of knowledge through their valuable research work.

The research of yore and of the present should be properly recorded so as to make it easily available to all lovers of knowledge and wisdom in the years to come. With this objective, we have contemplated to commemorate the 100th year of this grand event of 50th session of AIOC by way of publishing 100 monographs on different subjects in four languages viz., Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi and English. It is no doubt a herculean task but still worth of it, for the reason that these 100 monographs will inspire many young scholars to take upon a fresh study and research of the oriental subjects with more vigour and zeal.

The AIOC Centenary Publication Series includes wide variety of subjects like Literature, Language, Veda, Indian Philosophy, Sanskrit Grammar, Law, Children Literature, Yoga, Astronomy and Astrology, Ayurveda, Pali, Prakrit, Jain, Buddhism, Education, Library Science, Poetics, Aesthetics, and Indology. It also includes reprint of some rare texts of academic importance which have gone out of print are not easily available. We wish to mark this centenary celebrations with this series that connects the glory of the past and aspirations of future. I place on record my sincere gratitude to all the authors of these monographs who have kindly contributed to the richness of this

series.

I am confident that the books published in these series will definitely inspire the lovers of Oriental Learning in general and of Sanskrit Language and Literature in particular.

On this occasion, we have published a memorable book of all the speeches of Section-Presidents of all previous sessions of AIOC. It is indeed a very capacious addition to any collection. I with all respect thank two eminent scholars of our times - Prof. Gautam Patel, President and Prof. Saroja Bhate, General Secretary, the torch bearers of AIOC who have not only encouraged us in this venture but also made all efforts to provide these valuable historical speeches for us. I thank all executive members of AIOC and my colleagues of the varsity for making this event a grand success.

My words fall short in describing the painstaking efforts and scholarly commitment of my esteemed colleague Prof. Madhusudan Penna, local secretary of this session in bringing out this series.

I also take this opportunity to profusely thank Shri. Subhash Jain and Shri Dipak Jain, the proprietors of New Bharatiya Book Corporation, New Delhi for their enthusiastic approach and timely work with all precision and grace.

Let us all sanctify ourselves in the eternal flow of wisdom by reading these books and recommending these to others also!

सरस्वती श्रुतिमहती महीयताम्

Ramtek
10th January 2020

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Vice Chancellor, KKSU

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All India Oriental Conference

100th Year 50th Session
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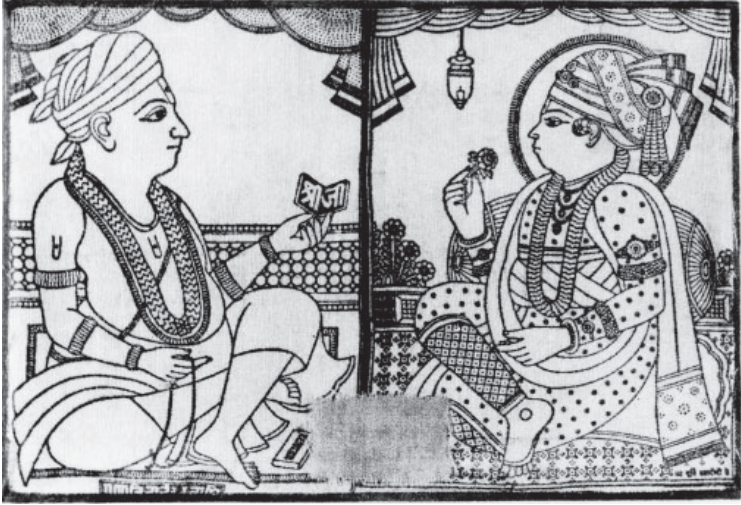
AKṢARA-PURUṢOTTAMA-
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A Students' Guide to Selected Verses from
Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadrēshdhas Swami's
Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā



Parabrahman Puruṣottama Swaminarayan (1781-1830 CE) (right) and Akṣarabrahman Gunatitanand Swami (1785-1867 CE) (left), the focal points of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. This image, which was gifted to Pramukh Swami Maharaj in 1977, is embellished with the fragment of a cloth that once belonged Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Pramukh Swami Maharaj daily offered worship to this image and its accompanying relic as part of his morning puja ritual.

Source: Courtesy of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha.

On the Occasion of Pramukh Swami Maharaj's Centenary Celebrations...

This Work is Dedicated to...

Parabrahman Puruṣottama Swaminarayan,
who revealed the knowledge of
the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

Shastriji Maharaj, who gave the Darśana
a concrete form
and an appropriate name.

Pramukh Swami Maharaj, who inspired
the writing of the Svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam
and the Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā.

Mahant Swami Maharaj, who inspired
the creation of this work.

Foreword

Indian philosophy has been blessed with the advent of various schools of thought over the ages. Most recently, the Vedānta school has seen the introduction of a significant new stream, Parabrahman Swaminarayan's Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. Many of India's foremost scholars have lauded this new darśana as a unique and authentic Vedantic school. They have also praised Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhadreshdas Swami's comprehensive, Saṃskṛta texts elucidating this philosophy, the *Prasthānatrayī-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam* (2009-12) and the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* (2017), as seminal contributions to the Vedāntic heritage.

I, too, have read Bhadreshdas Swami's texts myself and have been overwhelmed to see their unique principles, novel reflections, exceptional literary style, and lucid language. Certainly, Bhadreshdas Swami has revived the centuries-old bhāṣya and vāda-grantha tradition by producing these magnanimous works.

Along with this acceptance and praise, however, a need has arisen for these texts to be presentable in a format that can be accessed widely, particularly by beginners. The *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* appeared to me as the best place to start. Indeed, this literary masterpiece thoroughly establishes the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's primary tenets in the classical style of polemics, while also summarising these principles through 548 concise yet engaging verses. I felt that producing a work that

deconstructs the most important of these verses would be a noteworthy academic contribution.

I approached Bhadreshdas Swami with my idea two years ago. Bhadreshdas Swami readily agreed and asked Acharya Brahmasetudas Swami to undertake this task. Thereafter, Bhadreshdas Swami, Brahmasetudas Swami, and I worked together to envision this project.

Ācārya Brahmasetudas Swami has traditionally studied Nyāya, Vyākaraṇa, and the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's Saṃskṛta and vernacular texts for the past fifteen years. Moreover, he has closely worked with Bhadreshdas Swami throughout this time. I have also had the opportunity to engage with him over the past several years and can testify to his academic rigour. As an expert scholar and an authority in the field of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, he is uniquely positioned to undertake this project.

I am happy to see that this endeavour has come to fruition in the form of the present work. This text will indeed be a useful addition to university courses on Indian philosophy and the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

I express my sincere gratitude to Bhadreshdas Swami and Brahmasetudas Swami. I genuinely hope to see more such scholarship produced in the coming years. I pray to Bhagwan Swaminarayan that he blesses us so that we may further understand his visionary teachings and help others do the same.

Dr Rabindra Kumar Panda
Professor and Former Head
Dept. of Sanskrit, Pali & Prakrit
Faculty of Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University

Teacher's Guide

As a teacher of Nyāya, Vyākaraṇa, and the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, I have come to realise that Indian philosophy's conversations can be enriching and edifying on the one hand, yet voluminous and difficult to navigate on the other hand. Those wishing to learn, nonetheless, often address this conundrum by forgoing primary texts and instead relying on secondary, summary texts.

This book, one of a series of forthcoming works, attempts to make one of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's crucial primary texts accessible to students. It does so by providing translations and other pedagogical tools that explicate some of the most important passages of the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*, the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's vāda-grantha. What follows is a brief overview of this volume and a guide to several of its features.

Overview

This text is made up of nine chapters that are coterminous with the chapters of the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*. Each chapter is known as a 'dhārā'. The term 'sudhā' literally refers to ambrosia or amrita, whereas 'dhārā' indicates a stream. The analogy here thus signifies that the *Siddhānta-sudhā*'s chapters constitute streams of wisdom originating from the Divine. By providing knowledge of the Divine, these dhārās lead us towards enlightenment, ultimate liberation, and eternal bliss.

Below is an outline of this work's chapters:

1. The Maṅgala-dhārā – Presents the author's obeisance to Swaminarayan, who established the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, and the lineage of Akṣarabrahman gurus, who have fostered the darśana.
2. The Akṣarabrahma-dhārā – Explores the soteriological significance, form, and nature of the entity of Akṣarabrahman; also discusses Akṣarabrahman's four forms.
3. The Parabrahma-dhārā – Considers the form and attributes of God, also known as Puruṣottama; also examines the nature of Puruṣottama's perennial manifestation on earth.
4. The Pramāṇa-dhārā – Explains knowledge and the means of acquiring it.
5. The Jīva-dhārā – Explicates the form and nature of the ātman, or the individual soul.
6. The Īśvara-dhārā – Considers the form and nature of the īśvara, a category of sentient beings that are responsible for creation, sustenance, and dissolution.
7. The Māyā-dhārā – Presents māyā as the entity that prevents beings from attaining experiential knowledge; also explores how people can overcome māyā and attain liberation.
8. The Sādhana-dhārā – Explains spiritual praxis, chief of which is identifying with Akṣarabrahman and worshipping Parabrahman.
9. The Phala-dhārā – Describes the two types of liberation acquired by one who successfully practices the endeavours described in the previous chapter.

The text ends by again praising Swaminarayan and the lineage of Akṣarabrahman gurus and also extolling the countless devotees who daily live, experience, and celebrate the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

How to Use this Book

It is essential to make a note of this work's audience before moving forth. Indeed, the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana has garnered attention from students and scholars around the world, including those who adhere to either traditional or modern modes of scholarship. This work attempts to address the needs of both audiences with particular attention towards those who are novitiates to the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana and the Saṃskṛta language.

The work thus begins with the 'Siddhānta-patram', a philosophical document written in 2008 by Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Swaminarayan's fifth successor and the inspirer of the *Svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam* and *Siddhānta-sudhā*. The 'Siddhānta-patram' outlines the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's key principles in prose, providing context for the reader to understand the verses presented in this work.

Thereafter, each of this book's nine chapters is preceded by an introduction that maps the author's key arguments and sheds light on the way the overall work develops through each subsequent chapter.

The verses encompassed in this book are each presented with the following components:

1. The text of the original, selected verses appears in both Devanāgarī and transliterated, Roman script.
2. Padacchedas are presented in Devanāgarī. This is done by removing sandhis, or elisions resulting from phonetic morphology, and is meant to help readers clearly identify the terms that comprise each verse.

3. Charts are given to offer each verse's anvaya or reordering according to Saṃskṛta grammatical sequence. These charts also include word-by-word (and generally literal) English translations of each component of the verse in question.
4. English translations of the verses in their entirety are lastly given. These translations more often accord to English grammatical style and standards and attempt to shed light on implied meaning, rather than adhering to literal translation. This convention is meant to ease readability and understanding of the verses presented.

Often, verses are accompanied by footnotes that link individual verses or explore critical ideas not presented in the text. While these footnotes are far from exhaustive, they provide avenues for further inquiry and a more holistic understanding of the principles presented within each verse.

Conventions of Translation and Transliteration

Translation is always a difficult task, as it involves transferring ideas not just from one language to another but from one cultural realm to another. Inevitably, pieces of the original are always lost in the process. The translator's task is to minimise such loss but also to render an accessible text. Accordingly, most of the original Saṃskṛta in this work has been translated into English. Nonetheless, technical terms have often not been used in translation, keeping in mind that this text is targeted towards beginners.

At the same time, terms that are essential to the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana or the Vedānta tradition and are commonly used in their texts have often been left untranslated. Such terms have generally been treated in one of two ways: 1) if left untranslated, they are accompanied by a footnote at first instance and a glossary entry; 2) if translated, they are often used concurrently or interchangeably with their Saṃskṛta counterparts.

Diacritics have been included in all Saṃskṛta-based, common nouns. Saṃskṛta-based, proper nouns that name locations do not employ diacritics. The names of well-known people are treated similarly, although their first mentions are accompanied by diacritical representation in parenthesis. Transliterations appear according to the standards of the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration, or IAST.

Italics have not been used anywhere for Saṃskṛta-based, common nouns in order to enhance readability. Italics have been employed for the titles of texts; however, those texts that the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana considers to be of the śruti (revelatory) category are not italicised.

Words added to the translations that appear in charts have been put in either brackets or parenthesis. Brackets signify words that have been added to complete a sentence or thought, whereas parentheses signify those that have been added for explanation.

Along with contemporary referencing standards, this book also employs traditional referencing, as classical scholars generally prefer this method and as page numbers vary amongst the numerous editions of the primary sources cited here.

Siddhanta-Patram

Pramukh Swami Maharaj
(Śāstrī Nārāyaṇasvarūpadāsa)¹

The five entities – jīva, īśvara, māyā, Brahman (Brahma) and Parabrahman (Parabrahman) – are eternal, existent and forever ontologically distinct.

Parabrahman

Parabrahman Puruṣottamanārāyaṇa, who is the sovereign of Akṣara, is eternal, supreme, always divine, ever with a form, faultless, above māyā, one and unparalleled, and a cetana (sentient) entity.

Within his divine Akṣaradhāman, he is seated on a divine throne in his eternally divine, lustrous and teenage human form complete with two arms and all other features. He (Parabrahman) is worshipped with dāsabhāva (wilful servitude) by the mūrtimān (personal) form of Akṣarabrahman and infinite muktas (released jīvātmans and īśvarātmans). These muktas have attained a brāhmitanu and have attained likeness with Akṣarabrahman. Parabrahman is eternally and innately re-

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1 This letter, written by Pramukh Swami Maharaj, outlines Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. It is based on this letter that Sadhu Bhadreshdas wrote the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*.

plete with infinite liberating virtues and devoid of the qualities of māyā. He is without deficiency, forever possesses all powers, is all-knowing, and the all-doer. He is the material and efficient cause of all creation. He, while residing in his divine Akṣaradhāman in his vyatireka (particular) form, pervades and is the support of infinite brahmāṇḍas (universes) in his anvaya (all-pervasive) form as their antaryāmin. He is always infinitely more powerful than jīvas, īśvaras, māyā, akṣara muktas and Akṣarabrahman and is their independent controller, inspirer and śarīrin (embodier). By his own wish, he is the giver of the fruits of the actions of all the jīvas and īśvaras, and is the inspirer of their ability to will, to know and to do.

Parabrahman Puruṣottamanārāyaṇa, who is imperceptible by māyic (worldly) indriyas (senses) and antaḥkaraṇa (inner faculties), while remaining in Akṣaradhāman, by his own divine wish and out of compassion, for the ultimate liberation of infinite jīvas and īśvaras, and to fulfil the wishes of his devotees, manifests with all his divine virtues, powers, etc., in perceptible human form in each brahmāṇḍa and becomes visible to all.

That manifest form of Parabrahman Paramātmā is Saha-janand Swami Maharaj – Shri Swaminarayan Bhagwan (Saha-jānanda Svāmī Mahārāja – Śrī Svāminārāyaṇa Bhagavān). Only he is the absolute focus of worship for us all. He always remains entirely manifest in his anvaya form through the Akṣarabrahman guru to forever continue the upāsana (worshipful service) of his manifest form even after his disappearance (leaving of his human body).

He (Parabrahman) is the cause of all avatāras; he is the avatārin and the sovereign of them all. An avatāra occurs when he (Parabrahman) pervades a jīva or īśvara with the wish to fulfil a task. The cetanas (beings) of each of these avatāras are ontologically and inherently distinct from one another.

Akṣarabrahman

Akṣarabrahman is distinct from Parabrahman, and like Parabrahman it is eternal, one, beyond the three guṇas (qualities), a cetana (sentient) entity, and forever divine. Replete with infinite liberating virtues and devoid of all māyic qualities, it is eternally without faults. This Akṣarabrahman's form, qualities, powers, etc. are dependent only to Parabrahman. By Parabrahman's eternal wish, it is the cause, support, pervader, controller and śarīrin of all creation, which is jaḍacidātmaka .

Although Akṣarabrahman is metaphysically one entity, it serves in different ways through four forms.

In its cidākāśa form, Akṣarabrahman pervades within and outside infinite brahmāṇḍas and upholds them.

As an abode (Akṣaradhāman), Akṣarabrahman is the divine abode of 1) Parabrahman; 2) the mūrtimān form of Akṣarabrahman, who is in his (Parabrahman's) service; and 3) infinite akṣara muktas (released jīvātmans and īśvarātmans). There is only one such Akṣaradhāman. It is eternal and forever beyond the three guṇas. Only muktas, who have attained qualitative similarity to Akṣarabrahman, are able to enter it.

In that same Akṣaradhāman, Akṣarabrahman's form as the personal attendant has, like Parabrahman, a divine human form complete with two arms and all other features. As the ideal for akṣara muktas, he forever remains engrossed in Parabrahman's service.

That very Akṣarabrahman manifests in human form, in each brahmāṇḍa along with Parabrahman, as the guru, who is the complete and uninterrupted vessel of Parabrahman. Akṣara can make bound jīvas and īśvaras of the world brahmarūpa, have them attain ^{CC-0. Kirtanagar Kandas Saptamī Udaya (Rama) Collection} in Kirtanagar Kandas Saptamī Udaya (Rama) Collection (unwavering conviction) of Parabrahman, attain ultimate liberation, and forever experience the manifest presence of Paramātmā through

his (Akṣara's) divine association. He protects the traditions of the sampradāya and causes all to experience the supreme bliss. Gunatitanand Swami (Guṇātītānanda Svāmī), Bhagatji Maharaj (Bhagatajī Mahārāja), Shastriji Maharaj (Shastriji Mahārāja) and Yogiji Maharaj (Yogījī Mahārāja) have appeared in this succession of guṇātīta Akṣarabrahman gurus. This succession will continue uninterruptedly. At any given time, the path of ultimate liberation remains open through only one guru.

Māyā

Māyā is composed of the three guṇas, eternally changing, jaḍa, a material cause of the creation of infinite brahmāṇḍas, and Paramātman's diverse, mysterious power. As the cause of ego and attachment of jīvas and of īśvaras, this very māyā has been the cause of their births and deaths since eternity. Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman are forever entirely untainted by, beyond, and the śarīrin of this māyā.

Īśvara

An īśvara is an eternal cetana (sentient) entity distinct from Parabrahman, Akṣarabrahman and jīvas. Despite being extremely powerless when compared to Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman; these īśvaras bear greater power and knowledge than jīvas. Through his wish, Paramātman inspires them to perform tasks of creation, etc. of the brahmāṇḍas. Like the jīvas, these īśvaras are countless in number, infinitesimal (extremely small), indivisible, and possess other such qualities. They are jñānasvarūpa, jñātā (those who know), and eternally bound by māyā. They perform righteous and unrighteous karmas (actions) and experience the fruits of those actions.

Pradhāna Puruṣa, Virāt Puruṣa, the deities of their senses (indriyas) and the inner faculties (antahkaraṇa) are all beings of the īśvara category; and these īśvaras are ontologically and

inherently distinct from one another.

Jīva

The jīva is an eternal, cetana (sentient) entity ontologically distinct from Parabrahman, Akṣarabrahman, and īśvaras. These jīvas are countless, infinitesimal (extremely small), indivisible, and possess other such qualities. They are jñānasvarūpa, jñātā (those who know), and eternally bound by māyā. They perform righteous and unrighteous karmas (actions) and experience the fruits of those actions.

Spiritual Endeavour And Its Benefits

To attain ultimate liberation, mumukṣus (spiritual aspirants) should have firm love for Parabrahman Puruṣottama Bhagavān Swaminarayan and the present Akṣarabrahman guru, through whom Parabrahman is fully and continuously manifest, by having nirdoṣa buddhi in them, a feeling of the highest divinity in them, and upon meeting them, conviction in having met the present form of Parabrahman. They should greatly please them by firmly associating with them through thought, word and deed.

Aspirant jīvas and īśvaras who endeavour in this way, through Parabrahman's grace, having attained ekāntika dharma and having become brahmarūpa, that is, having attained similarity to Akṣarabrahman, acquire the highest devotion to Parabrahman. All their miseries and faults are forever destroyed, and they experience the supreme bliss of Paramātman while alive. By Paramātman's wish, such a brahmarūpa devotee, upon leaving the body, attains Paramātman's Akṣaradhāman through the arcimārga. There, having attained a brāhmic-body, the devotee forever enjoys divine bliss while offering, with dāsabhāva, service in the form of performing darśana of Parabrahman, the

Lord of Akṣaradhāman.

The Meaning Behind Akṣarapuruṣottama Upāsanā

Akṣarapuruṣottama upāsanā is not the upāsanā of two entities – Akṣara and Puruṣottama; but it refers to offering upāsanā to Puruṣottama having become akṣararūpa – in other words, to offer upāsanā to Parabrahman having become brahmarūpa. When Parabrahman, who travels (manifests) in human form, returns to his abode, he absorbs the powers of the Brahmasvarūpa guru and himself travels (remains manifest on earth) through him. Therefore, an aspirant who associates with the manifest guru is, in fact, offering upāsanā only to one Paramātmā.

The meaning of the Swaminarayan mahāmantra is incorporated in this meaning of Akṣara-Puruṣottama upāsanā: that is, to become svāmirūpa - akṣararūpa, and offer devotion – upāsanā with dāsabhāva to Nārāyaṇa - Parabrahman Puruṣottama Nārāyaṇa.

Conclusion

In this way, these philosophical principles are Vedic, eternal, revealed by Shriji Maharaj (Śrīji Mahārāja, i.e. Svāminārāyaṇa), and propagated by the lineage of guṇātīta gurus.

Jay Swaminarayan from Shastri Narayanswarupdas (Śāstrī Nārāyaṇasvarūpadāsa)

Guru Pūrṇimā, Saṃvata 2064 (18 July 2008), Bochasan

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Chapter 1

Maṅgala-dhārā

1.1 Introduction

Saṃskṛta texts often begin with benedictions aimed at invoking blessings for the successful completion of the work being composed. Such benediction is known as the maṅgalācaraṇa (literally, ‘auspicious act’). In this tradition, the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*’s first chapter, adequately named the ‘Maṅgala-dhārā’, commences with prayers to Parabrahman Puruṣottama Bhagwan Swaminarayan (Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa), the founder of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. These prayers recall Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s various names and recount his life and auspicious works – his inspiring journey as a child yogī, establishment and nourishment of the Swaminarayan fellowship, and promise to stay forever present on earth through a lineage of brahmasvarūpa gurus.¹

This chapter then offers obeisance to Akṣara and Puruṣottama, the entities that form the epicentre of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. Thereafter, it presents the ‘Yajñapurūṣa-stava’. This section contains the author’s homage to Brahmasvarūpa

¹ This lineage includes Aksarabrahman Gunatitanand Swami (1785-1863 CE), Brahmasvarūpa Bhagatji Maharaj (1829-98 CE), Brahmasvarūpa Shastriji Maharaj (1865-1951 CE), Brahmasvarūpa Yogiji Maharaj (1892-1971 CE), Brahmasvarūpa Pramukh Swami Maharaj (1921-2016 CE), and Pragaṭa Brahmasvarūpa Mahant Swami Maharaj (b.1933 CE).

Shastriji Maharaj (Śāstriji Mahārāja), the third successor in the lineage of Akṣarabrahman gurus. Shastriji Maharaj gave name and form to Bhagwan Swaminarayan's philosophy by entitling it 'the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana' and consecrated the mūrtis of Akṣara and Puruṣottama in majestic, stone mandiras. The Yajñapurusa-stava, specifically, recounts Shastriji Maharaj's erudition, courage, and tireless efforts to establish and spread the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. It also recalls his selection of Brahmasvarūpa Yogiji Maharaj (Yogijī Mahārāja) and Brahmasvarūpa Pramukh Swami Maharaj (Pramukha Svāmī Mahārāja) as his successors.

Through the next section, the 'Nārāyaṇasvarūpa-abhidhyāna', the author bows to his guru, Brahmasvarūpa Pramukh Swami Maharaj, who inspired the creation of the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*. This benediction describes Pramukh Swami Maharaj as a sthitaprajña yogī, guṇātīta, and Paramātman's dearest. It also extolls him as being the only person who can help people achieve absolute conviction in Paramātman.

Thereafter, via the 'Abhyarthanā', the author bows to Pramukh Swami Maharaj's successor, Mahant Swami Maharaj (Mahanta Svāmī Mahārāja), the manifest, Akṣarabrahman guru.

The 'Maṅgala-dhārā' concludes with an overview of the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*. This sketch includes an explanation of the Swaminarayan mantra, which plays an essential role in prayer in the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. It also enumerates the five eternal entities, whose knowledge leads to the perfection of brahmavidyā. Lastly, the author writes that the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* is not an independent creation but is merely a joyful recollection of the truths presented in the 'Siddhānta-patram', the philosophical document that was written by Pramukh Swami Maharaj in 2008 (see front matter).

1.2 Benediction

The author begins with an invocation to his iṣṭadeva, Bhagwan Swaminarayan, wherein he evokes Swaminarayan by his different names.

मङ्गलं सहजानन्दः श्रीहरिर्मङ्गलं शुभम् ।

मङ्गलं नीलकण्ठो हि स्वामिनारायणः सदा ॥ १ ॥

maṅgalaṁ saha-jānandaḥ śrīharirmaṅgalaṁ śubham,
maṅgalaṁ nīlakaṇṭho hi svāminārayaṇaḥ sadā.

पदच्छेदः - मङ्गलम्, सहजानन्दः, श्रीहरिः, मङ्गलम्, शुभम्, मङ्गलम्,
नीलकण्ठः, हि, स्वामिनारायणः, सदा ॥

अन्वयः

सहजानन्दः - Sahajanand
(Sahajānanda)

नीलकण्ठः - Neelkanth
(Nīlakaṇṭha)

मङ्गलम् - auspicious

हि - indeed

श्रीहरिः - Shri Hari (Śrī
Hari)

स्वामिनारायणः - Swamina-
rayan

मङ्गलम् - auspicious

सदा - ever

शुभम् - benevolent

(मङ्गलम्) - auspicious

मङ्गलम् - auspicious

Sahajanand is auspicious. Shri Hari, certainly, is auspicious and benevolent. Neelkanth is auspicious. Swaminarayan is forever auspicious, indeed. (1)

आदौ भक्त्यङ्गजन्मा गहनवनगतिर्नीलकण्ठस्वरूपे
 सिद्धान्तस्थापनार्थं स्थितिमतिदयया सम्प्रदायप्रतिष्ठाम् ।
 कृत्वा यागान् अहिंसान् सहजसुखकरान् त्यागिनो मन्दिराणि
 प्राकट्यं ब्रह्मणि स्वं सकलजनहिते स्थापयन् धाम यातः ॥ २ ॥

ādau bhaktyaṅgajanmā gahanavanagatirnilakaṇṭhasvarūpe,
 siddhāntasthāpanārthaṁ sthitimatidayayā sampradāyapraṭiṣṭhām.
 kṛtvā yāgān ahiṁsān sahasasukhakarān tyāginō mandirāṇi,
 prākāṭyaṁ brahmaṇi svaṁ sakalajanahite sthāpayandhāmayātaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - आदौ, भक्त्यङ्गजन्मा, गहनवनगतिः, नीलकण्ठस्वरूपे,
 सिद्धान्तस्थापनार्थम् स्थितिम्, अतिदयया, सम्प्रदायप्रतिष्ठाम्, कृत्वा, यागान्,
 अहिंसान्, सहजसुखकरान्, त्यागिनः, मन्दिराणि, प्राकट्यम्, ब्रह्मणि, स्वं,
 सकलजनहिते, स्थापयन्, धाम, यातः ॥

अन्वयः

आदौ - at first	सिद्धान्तस्थापनार्थम् - to es-
भक्त्यङ्गजन्मा - he who was	tablish his philosophical
born of Bhakti	principles
नीलकण्ठस्वरूपे - in the form	सम्प्रदायप्रतिष्ठाम् (कृत्वा) -
of Neelkanth	having established the
गहनवनगतिः - he who	sampradāya
travelled through dense	सहजसुखकरान् - those that
forests	gracefully imparted peace
स्थितिम् (कृत्वा) - having	अहिंसान् - non-violent
stopped his travels	यागान् - yajñas
अतिदयया - compassionate	त्यागिनः - sādhus
ly	मन्दिराणि - mandiras

कृत्वा - having created	ब्रह्मणि - in Akṣarabrahman
सकलजनहिते - for the welfare of all	स्थापयन् - establishing
स्वम् - his own	धाम - the divine abode
प्राकट्यम् - manifestation	यातः - went to

Swaminarayan, who was born of Bhakti,² travelled through dense forests in the form of Neelkanth. He ended his travels and compassionately founded a sampradāya to establish his philosophical principles. Thereafter, he performed non-violent yajñas, created mandiras, and initiated sādhus, all of which imparted peace. He then returned to his divine abode, having established his continuing manifestation through Akṣarabrahman³ for the welfare of all. (2)

2 Bhagwan Swaminarayan was born to Bhaktidevī and Dharmadeva Pāṇde on 3 April 1781 (Dave, Bhagavān Śrī Svāminārāyaṇa, Vol.1, 22). In the present verse, the author recalls Swaminarayan's divine birth by referring to him as the son of Bhakti.

3 'Akṣara', 'Brahman', and 'Akṣarabrahman' are synonymous terms, as is established in the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sūdhā* through several śāstric references (Bhadreshdas 19). To prevent confusion, however, all references to any of these terms are translated here as 'Akṣarabrahman'.

1.3 Akṣara-Puruṣottama Vandanā

The author now bows to Akṣara and Puruṣottama while also revealing the implicit meaning of the word Swaminarayan.

स्वामिनारायणं नौमि ह्यक्षरपुरुषोत्तमम् ।

स्वामिनारायणौ नौमि ह्यक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ ॥ ३ ॥

svāminārāyaṇaṁ naumi hyakṣarapuruṣottamam,
svāminārāyaṇau naumi hyakṣarapuruṣottamau.

पदच्छेदः - स्वामिनारायणम्, नौमि, हि, अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमम्, स्वामिनारायणौ, नौमि,
हि, अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ ॥

अन्वयः

स्वामिनारायणम् - to

Nārāyaṇa along with

Svāmī

अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमम् - to Puruṣot-
tama along with Svāmī

हि - indeed

नौमि - I bow

स्वामिनारायणौ - to Svāmī

and Nārāyaṇa

हि - indeed

अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ - to Akṣara
and Puruṣottama

नौमि - I bow

I bow to Nārāyaṇa along with Svāmī, that is, Puruṣottama along with Akṣara. I bow to Svāmī and Nārāyaṇa, that is, Akṣara and Puruṣottama. (3)

1.4 Yajñapurūṣa-stava

Brahmasvarūpa Shastriji Maharaj, also known as Yagnapurushdas (Yajñapurūṣadāsa), was Swaminarayan's third successor. He coined Swaminarayan's doctrine as 'the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana' and enshrined this philosophy by consecrating mūrtis of Akṣara and Puruṣottama in exquisite, stone mandiras.⁴ Here, the text salutes him by recalling his extraordinary contributions.

सिद्धान्तपुष्पसुफलामृतदिव्यगन्धी
यस्माद् वसन्ततिलकश्च वसन्तजन्मा ।
रूढो हि यज्ञपुरुषो भुवि तत्त्ववृक्षश्च
छन्दो वसन्ततिलका त्वरते सुगाने ॥ ४ ॥

siddhāntapuṣpasuphalāmṛtadivya-gandhī,
yasmād vasantatilakaśca vasantajanmā.
rūḍho hi yajñapurūṣo bhuvi tattvavṛkṣaś,
chando vasantatilakā tvarate sugāne.

पदच्छेदः - सिद्धान्तपुष्पसुफलामृतदिव्यगन्धी, यस्माद्, वसन्ततिलकः, च, वसन्तजन्मा, रूढः, हि यज्ञपुरुषः, भुवि, तत्त्ववृक्षः, छन्दः, वसन्ततिलका, त्वरते, सुगाने ॥

अन्वयः

यस्माद् - because

सिद्धान्तपुष्पसुफलामृतदिव्यगन्धी -
He who bristled with the
ambrosial fragrance of the
Akṣara-Puruṣottama phi-
losophy, which contained

the quintessence of spiri-
tuality, just as flowers and
fruits contain the sweet
essence of their hosts.

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4 For a comprehensive analysis of Shastriji Maharaj's life and work, see Harshadrai Dave's two-volume, Gujarati work, entitled *Brahmasvarūpa Śāstrī-jī Mahārāj* (Swaminarayan Aksharpith, 2014).

वसन्तजन्मा - he who was
born in [the beautiful
season] of vasanta

वसन्ततिलकः - he who was
the ornament of vasanta.

च - and

यज्ञपुरुषः - Yagnapurush

तत्त्ववृक्षः - he who was like
a tree of philosophical
wisdom.

भुवि - in the world

हि - indeed

रूढः - he was known

वसन्ततिलका - the vas-
anta-ilakā

छन्दः - metre

सुगाने - in singing his
praises

त्वरते - hurries

Yagnapurushdas, as he was known throughout the world, bristled with the ambrosial fragrance of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama philosophy, which contained the quintessence of spirituality, just as flowers and fruits contain the sweet essence of their hosts. He was like a sturdy, deep-rooted tree, bounteous with philosophical wisdom. Having taken birth in vasanta, he was the ornament of this wonderful season.⁵ Indeed, the vasanta-tilakā metre, personified, rushes forth to sing his glory.⁶ (4)

5 'Vasanta' refers to the Indian spring season. It roughly coincides with the Gregorian months of February and March.

6 The author eulogises Shastriji Maharaj here through verses composed in vasanta-tilakā, one of the many Samskrta metrical composition styles. He thus executes a play on words by making note of the Vasanta month and the vasanta-tilakā metre in succession; he then caps this inaugural stanza by personising his chosen metre, showing it to be impatient to sing the revered Shastriji Maharaj's praises.

निश्चित्य ब्रह्मपरब्रह्मस्वरूपतत्त्वं
 शास्त्राच्च सद्गुरुमुखात् स्वधिया सयुक्तिम् ।
 प्रायोजयत् सकलबुद्धिसुचातुरीं स्वां
 ब्रह्माक्षरस्य खलु डिण्डिमभव्यघोषे ॥ ५ ॥

niścitya brahmaparabrahmasvarūpatattvaṃ,
 śāstrācca sadgurumukhāt svadhiyā sayuktim.
 prāyojayat sakalabuddhisucāturīm svām,
 brahmākṣarasya khalu ḍiṇḍimabhavyaghoṣe.

पदच्छेदः - निश्चित्य, ब्रह्मपरब्रह्मस्वरूपतत्त्वम्, शास्त्रात्, च, सद्गुरुमुखात्, स्वधिया, सयुक्तिम्, प्रायोजयत्, सकलबुद्धिसुचातुरीम्, स्वाम्, ब्रह्माक्षरस्य, खलु, डिण्डिमभव्यघोषे ॥

अन्वयः

ब्रह्मपरब्रह्मस्वरूपतत्त्वम् - the	(सः) - he
forms of Akṣarabrahman	स्वां सकलबुद्धिचातुरीम् - all of
and Parabrahman	his perception and wis-
निश्चित्य - with conviction	dom
शास्त्रात् - from the śāstras	ब्रह्माक्षरस्य - of Akṣarabrah-
सद्गुरुमुखात् - first-hand	man
from senior sādhus	डिण्डिमभव्यघोषे - in sound-
स्वधिया च - and using his	ing the beautiful drum
intelligence	खलु - indeed
सयुक्तिम् - using reason	प्रायोजयत् - used

With firm conviction in Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, he employed the śāstras, the words of senior sādhus, reason, and his own perception and wisdom to sound the beautiful drum announcing Akṣarabrahman's greatness. (5)

कोलाहलश्च कलहश्च कुकर्मघाताः
 सोढाः सुहासवदनेन प्रसादबुद्ध्या ।
 दुष्टा न क्वापि सरणी प्रतिकारभावात्
 सिद्धान्त-सत्य-परिरक्षण-बद्ध-दृष्टेः ॥ ६ ॥

kolāhalaśca kalahaśca kukarmaghātāḥ,
 soḍhāḥ suhāsavadanena prasādabuddhyā.
 duṣṭā na kvāpi saraṇī pratikārabhāvāt.
 siddhānta-satya-parirakṣaṇa-baddha-dṛṣṭeḥ.

पदच्छेदः - कोलाहलः, च, कलहः, च, कुकर्मघाताः, सोढाः, सुहासवदनेन,
 प्रसादबुद्ध्या, दुष्टा, न, क्वापि, सरणी, प्रतिकाराभावात्, सिद्धान्तसत्यपरि-
 रक्षणबद्धदृष्टेः ॥

अन्वयः

कोलाहलः - uproar	(अपि च) - moreover
कलहः - strife	सिद्धान्तसत्यपरिरक्षणबद्धदृष्टेः -
कुकर्मघाताः च - and de- structive acts	of he who was focused on protecting truth
सुहासवदनेन - with a joyful countenance	प्रतिकारभावात् - out of a desire for revenge
प्रसादबुद्ध्या च - and with grace	न क्वापि - not at any time
(तेन) सोढाः - were tolerated by him	दुष्टा सरणी - the low path (गृहीता) - taken up

He joyfully and graciously tolerated uproar, strife, and de-
 structive acts that came his way. He never walked the low path
 of revenge, as he was focused on protecting truth in the form of
 the Akṣara-Puruṣottama philosophy. (6)

ते पञ्च साधुनियमा ननु पञ्च दिव्या
 ब्रह्माक्षरं तदधिपो हरिकृष्णदेवः ।
 एवं समादरधृतं परमुक्तिवर्त्म
 ब्रह्माण्डजीवसकलभ्रमणाव्युदासे ॥ ७ ॥

te pañca sādhanīyamā nanu pañca divyā,
 brahmakṣaram tadadhipo harikṛṣṇadevaḥ.
 evaṁ samādaradhṛtaṁ paramuktivartma,
 brahmāṇḍa-jīva-sakala-bhramaṇā-vyudāse.

पदच्छेदः - ते, पञ्च, साधुनियमाः, ननु, पञ्च, दिव्याः, ब्रह्माक्षरम्,
 तद्, अधिपः, हरिकृष्णदेवः, एवम्, समादरधृतम्, परमुक्तिवर्त्म,
 ब्रह्माण्डजीवसकलभ्रमणाव्युदासे ॥

अन्वयः

ते - with him	हरिकृष्णदेवः - Harikṛṣṇa
पञ्च (साधवः) - five sādhus	Mahārāja (Swaminarayan)
पञ्च च - and five	एवम् - in this way
दिव्याः - sacred	ब्रह्माण्डजीवसकलभ्रमणाव्युदासे -
साधुनियमाः - vows for	to clear the doubts of all
sādhus	परमुक्तिवर्त्म - the path to
ननु - indeed	ultimate liberation
ब्रह्माक्षरम् - Akṣarabrahman	समादरधृतम् - was honour-
तदधिपः - its ruler	ably established.

He had with him just five sādhus, his five sacred vows,⁷ and the entities of Akṣara and Puruṣottama. With no other possessions, he honourably established the path to ultimate liberation, which cleared the confusions of countless souls. (7)

7 Swaminarayan gave his sādhus five central vows: niṣkāma (chastity), nirlobha (abstinence from greed), nirmāna (humility), niṣvāda (indifference to taste), and niṣneha (non-attachment). Adherence to these vows is considered a sādhu's true ornaments and wealth.

वार्तामुपासनपरां कुरुते नितान्तं
 हृद्भेदिनीं हृदयनिर्झरणामृताद्याम् ।
 अर्कागमावधितया गुरुगौरवेण
 ब्रह्माक्षरस्य पुरुषोत्तमसर्वकर्तुः ॥ ८ ॥

vārtāmupāsanaparāṃ kurute nitāntaṃ,
 hṛdbhedinīm hṛdayanirjhaṇāmṛtāḍhyām.
 arkāgamāvadhitayā gurugauraveṇa,
 brahmākṣarasya puruṣottamasarvakartuḥ.

पदच्छेदः - वार्ताम्, उपासनपराम्, कुरुते, नितान्तम्, हृद्भेदिनीम्,
 हृदयनिर्झरणामृताद्याम्, अर्कागमावधितया, गुरुगौरवेण, ब्रह्माक्षरस्य,
 पुरुषोत्तमसर्वकर्तुः ॥

अन्वयः

(सः) - He	अर्कागमावधितया - until
नितान्तम् - incessantly	sunrise
हृद्भेदिनीम् - that which pierced the heart.	ब्रह्माक्षरस्य - of Akṣarabrah- man
हृदयनिर्झरणामृताद्याम् - that which was like a fall of nectar flowing from his core	पुरुषोत्तमसर्वकर्तुः (च) - and of Puruṣottama, the om- niagent
गुरुगौरवेण - with pride in his guru	उपासनपराम् - related to upāsanā
	वार्ताम् - talks
	कुरुते - would do

He incessantly spoke of upāsanā. His words were like a fall of nectar flowing from his core, and his impassioned talks pierced his listeners' hearts. With pride in his guru, he would enthusiastically speak about Akṣarabrahman and Puruṣottama, the omniagent; often, his talks would continue until sunrise. (8)

श्रीवर्धमानपुर - भोगवतीतटस्थे
 वृत्तालयस्थितिमता हरिधाम बद्धम् ।
 बोचासणे प्रमुखतीर्थकृता कृतानि
 सारङ्गदुर्गनगरादिषु मन्दिराणि ॥ ९ ॥

śrīvardhamānapura - bhogavatītaṭasthe,
 vṛttālayasthitimatā haridhāma baddham.
 bocāsaṇe pramukhatīrthakṛtā kṛtāni,
 sāraṅga-durganagarādiṣu mandirāṇi.

पदच्छेदः - श्रीवर्धमानपुरभोगवतीतटस्थे, वृत्तालयस्थितिमता, हरिधाम, बद्धम्,
 बोचासणे, प्रमुखतीर्थकृता, कृतानि, सारङ्गदुर्गनगरादिषु, मन्दिराणि ॥

अन्वयः

वृत्तालयस्थितिमता (तेन) - by he
 who resided in Vruttalaya
 (Vartal)

श्रीवर्धमानपुरभोगवतीतटस्थे - on
 the bank of the Bhogava-
 ti River in Vardhamana
 (Vadhvan)

हरिधाम - a mandira

बद्धम् - was built

बोचासणे - in Bochasan

सारङ्गदुर्गनगरादिषु (च) - and
 in Sarangpur, Durganaga-
 ra (Gadhada), and other
 places

प्रमुखतीर्थकृता - by he who
 inspired significant pil-
 grimage sanctuaries

मन्दिराणि - mandiras

कृतानि - were built

While residing in Vruttalaya (Vartal), he built a mandira on the Bhogavati River's bank in Vardhamana (Vadhvan). The inspirer of significant pilgrimage sanctuaries, he also created mandiras in Bochasan, Sarangpur, Durganagara (Gadhada), and other locations. (9)

भिक्षाटनं प्रतिदिनं प्रभुरेकच्छत्रं
पाषाणद्रव्यसुजनातिविरक्तकालः ।
न्यूनश्च साधुहरिभक्तगणस्तथापि
संस्थामहोऽयमकरोत् सुविरूढमूलाम् ॥ १० ॥

bhikṣāṭanam pratidinam prabhurekakchatram,
pāṣāṇa-dravya-sujanātivirakta-kālāḥ.
nyūnaśca sādhuharibhaktagaṇastathāpi,
saṁsthāmaho'yamakarot suvirūḍhamūlām.

पदच्छेदः - भिक्षाटनम्, प्रतिदिनम्, प्रभुः, एकच्छत्रम्, पाषाणद्रव्यसुजनातिविरक्तकालः,
न्यूनः, च, साधुहरिभक्तगणः, तथा, अपि, संस्थाम्, अहो, अयम्, अकरोत्,
सुविरूढमूलाम् ॥

अन्वयः

प्रतिदिनम् - every day	तथापि - yet still
भिक्षाटनम् - roaming for alms	अयम् - this person (Yagna- puruṣdās)
प्रभुः - Paramātmān	पाषाणद्रव्यसुजनातिविरक्तकालः - when stones, wealth, and workers were direly scarce
एकच्छत्रम् - singular refuge	
न्यूनः च - and a small	सुविरूढमूलाम् - that which has unshakeable roots
साधुहरिभक्तगणः - following of sādhus and devotees	संस्थाम् - an organisation
(अवर्तन्त) - existed	अकरोत् - created
अहो - Ah!	

He begged for alms daily. Paramātmān was his only shelter. Stones for construction, wealth, and workers were direly scarce. Further, he only had a small following of sādhus and devotees. Yet, he created an organisation with unshakeable roots. (10)

विश्वे ह्युपासनविधेः सुविकासहेतोर्
 आनन्दब्रह्म सततं सहजो हि योगी।
 वात्सल्यमूर्तिसुखदश्च प्रसन्नचेताः
 स्वैक्येन दिव्यसुगुणैः परिचायितोऽस्ति ॥ ११ ॥

viśve hyupāsanavidheḥ suvikāsaheṭor,
 ānandabrahma satataṁ sahajo hi yogī.
 vātsalyamūrtisukhadaśca prasannacetāḥ,
 svaikyena divyasugūṇaiḥ paricāyito'sti.

पदच्छेदः - विश्वे, हि, उपासनविधेः, सुविकासहेतोः, आनन्दब्रह्म, सततम्, सहजः
 हि, योगी, वात्सल्यमूर्तिसुखदः, च, प्रसन्नचेताः, स्वैक्येन, दिव्यसुगुणैः,
 परिचायितः, अस्ति ॥

अन्वयः

विश्वे - in the world	आनन्दब्रह्म - as the joyful
उपासनविधेः - of upāsana	Akṣarabrahman
सुविकासहेतोः हि - for nour-	सततम् - unhindered
ishment, indeed	सहजः योगी - the innate yogī
(यज्ञपुरुषदासेन) - by Yagna-	वात्सल्यमूर्तिः हि - affection
purushdas	personified, indeed
स्वैक्येन - through his one-	प्रसन्नचेताः च - he whose
ness	heart was sublime
दिव्यगुणैः (च) - and through	(योगिराजः) परिचायितः अस्ति
his blessed qualities	- Yogiji Maharaj was thus
	introduced.

To nourish this upāsana, Yagnapurushdas introduced Yogiji Maharaj as his successor by making known his identity as Akṣarabrahman, the embodiment of joy, and by bringing to light his divine virtues – his innate perfection of yoga, personification of affection, and sublimity of mind. (11)

नैकात्मनः परममोक्षपथं विनेतुं
 दीर्घेक्षणेन स्वधिया च विचक्षणोऽयम्।
 उत्साह-धैर्य-करुणा-रस-सन्निपातं
 योग्याशिषा मम गुरुं प्रमुखं चकार ॥ १२ ॥

naikātmanah paramamokṣapatham vinetum,
 dīrghekṣaṇena svadhiyā ca vicakṣaṇo'yam.
 utsāha-dhairya-karuṇā-rasa-sannipātaṁ,
 yogyāśiṣā mama guruṁ pramukhaṁ cakāra.

पदच्छेदः - नैकात्मनः, परममोक्षपथम्, विनेतुम्, दीर्घेक्षणेन, स्वधिया, च,
 विचक्षणः, अयम्, उत्साहधैर्यकरुणारससन्निपातम्, योग्याशिषा, मम, गुरुम्,
 प्रमुखम्, चकार ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् - Yagnapurushdasji	योग्याशिषा - with Yogiji
विचक्षणः - who was wise	Maharaj's blessings
दीर्घेक्षणेन - through vision	उत्साहधैर्यकरुणारससन्निपातम् - a
स्वधिया च - and by insight	blend of energy, forbear-
नैकात्मनः - of countless	ance, and compassion.
souls	मम - my
परममोक्षपथम् - on the path	गुरुम् - guru
to ultimate liberation	प्रमुखम् - administrative
विनेतुम् - to take	head
	चकार - was made

The wise Yagnapurushdas declared as 'pramukha'⁸ my guru, in whom energy, forbearance, and compassion converged. This visionary and insightful decision, supported by Yogiji Maharaj's blessings, was to help take countless souls along the path to liberation. (12)^{CC-0. Kavikulguru Kalidas Sanskrit University Ramtek Collection}

8 The author's guru, initiated as Narayanswarupdas, became known as Pramukh Swami upon being appointed as BAPS' administrative head.

1.5 Nārāyaṇasvarūpa-abhidhyāna

Pramukh Swami Maharaj, also known as Narayanaswarupdas (Nārāyaṇasvarūpadāsa), was Swaminarayan's fifth successor, the author's guru, and the inspirer of the Prasthānatrayī-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam and Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā. Through the following twelve verses, the author reveres him by recalling his divine virtues.

नारायणस्वरूपोऽयं साक्षाद् ब्रह्माऽक्षरं गुरुः ।

गुणाढ्यः प्रमुखः प्रेष्ठो भक्त्याऽभिध्यायते मया ॥ १३ ॥

nārāyaṇasvarūpo'yaṁ sākṣād brahmā'kṣaram guruḥ,
guṇāḍhyaḥ pramukhaḥ preṣṭho bhaktyā'bhidhyāyate mayā.

पदच्छेदः - नारायणस्वरूपः, अयम्, साक्षात्, ब्रह्म, अक्षरम्, गुरुः, गुणाढ्यः,
प्रमुखः, प्रेष्ठः, भक्त्या, अभिध्यायते, मया ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् - This here	प्रेष्ठः - one who is dearly
नारायणस्वरूपः - Narayan-	beloved
swarupdas	गुरुः - guru
प्रमुखः - Pramukh [Swami	मया - by me
Maharaj]	भक्त्या - with devotion
साक्षाद् - in person	अभिध्यायते - is contemplat-
अक्षरं ब्रह्म - Akṣarabrahman	ed upon
गुणाढ्यः - one who has	
abundant virtues	

This here Narayanswarupdas, or Pramukh Swami Maharaj, is the Akṣarabrahman guru in person. He possesses abundant virtues and is dearly beloved. I devoutly contemplate upon him.
(13)

ब्रह्मासि सच्चिदानन्दो निर्विकल्पसमाधिमान्।
निरंशो निर्विकारोऽसि देहावस्थापरस्तथा ॥ १४ ॥

brahmāsi saccidānando nirvikalpasamādhimān,
niraṁśo nirvikāro'si dehāvasthāparastathā.

पदच्छेदः - ब्रह्म, असि, सच्चिदानन्दः, निर्विकल्पसमाधिमान्, निरंशः, निर्विकारः,
असि, देहावस्थापरः, तथा ॥

अन्वयः

(त्वम्) - You

तथा - also

ब्रह्म - Akṣarabrahman

(त्वम्) - you

सच्चिदानन्दः - truth, sentience, and bliss

निरंशः - undivided

निर्विकारः - flawless

निर्विकल्पसमाधिमान् - one who has attained nirvikalpa samadhi.

देहावस्थापरः - above the body's states of being

असि - are

असि - are

You are Akṣarabrahman. You are the very embodiment of truth, sentience, and bliss. You have attained nirvikalpa samādhī. Moreover, you are undivided, flawless, and above the body's states of being. (14)

अनादिकालतः सर्वमायिकोपाधिवर्जितः ।

पञ्चसु वर्तमानेषु नित्यमखण्डितस्थितिः ॥ १५ ॥

anādikālaṭṭhaḥ sarvamāyikopādhivarjitaḥ,
pañcasu vartamāneṣu nityamakhaṇḍitasthitiḥ.

पदच्छेदः - अनादिकालतः, सर्वमायिकोपाधिवर्जितः, पञ्चसु, वर्तमानेषु, नित्यम्,
अखण्डितस्थितिः ॥

अन्वयः

(त्वम्) - you

अनादिकालतः - eternally

सर्वमायिकोपाधिवर्जितः - free
from all bonds caused by
māyā

पञ्चसु वर्तमानेषु - in the five
vows

नित्यम् - always

अखण्डितस्थितिः - entirely
established

(असि) - you are

You are eternally free from māyā's shackles and are ever immersed in adhering to the five principle vows of a sādhu.⁹ (15)

⁹ See footnote 7.

स्थितप्रज्ञः परो योगी निवृत्तोऽसि प्रवर्तने।

ज्ञानवाँश्च गुणातीतः प्रेष्ठोऽसि सर्वतो हरेः ॥ १६ ॥

sthitaprajñāḥ paro yogī nivṛtto'si pravartane,
jñānavāmscha guṇātītaḥ preṣṭho'si sarvato hareḥ.

पदच्छेदः - स्थितप्रज्ञः, परः, योगी, निवृत्तः, असि, प्रवर्तने, ज्ञानवान्, च, गुणातीतः,
प्रेष्ठः, असि, सर्वतः, हरेः ॥

अन्वयः

(त्वम्) - You

ज्ञानवान् - wise

स्थितप्रज्ञः - sthitaprajña¹²

गुणातीतः - guṇātīta (one
who is above māyā's qual-
ities)

परः - preeminent

सर्वतः - in every way

योगी - yogī

च - and

प्रवर्तने - while being en-
gaged

हरेः - Paramātman's

निवृत्तः - one who is de-
tached

प्रेष्ठः - dearest

असि - are

असि - are

You are the sthitaprajña,¹⁰ preeminent yogī. You are en-
gaged in service, yet you are eternally detached. You are wise,
guṇātīta (above māyā's qualities), and Paramātman's dearest in
every way. (16)

¹⁰ 'Sthitaprajña' is one of the most well-known terms the *Bhagavadgītā* uses to describe the quintessential devotee (verses 2.54-72). By using this term to describe Pramukh Swami Maharaj, the author indicates that his guru is the living example of the *Gītā*'s core teachings.

परमैकान्तिको भक्तो दिव्यभावरतः सदा ।

निश्चयस्ते निरुत्थान उत्तमनिर्विकल्पकः ॥ १७ ॥

paramaikāntiko bhakto divyabhāvarataḥ sadā,
niścayaste nirutthāna uttamanirvikalpakah.

पदच्छेदः - परमैकान्तिकः, भक्तः, दिव्यभावरतः, सदा, निश्चयः, ते, निरुत्थानः,
उत्तमनिर्विकल्पकः ॥

अन्वयः

(त्वम्) - you

ते - your

परमैकान्तिकः - the parama
ekāntika

निश्चयः - faith

भक्तः - bhakta

निरुत्थानः - that which is
unmoveable

सदा - always

उत्तमनिर्विकल्पकः - the high-
est form of that which is
unwavering

दिव्यभावरतः - engrossed in
divyabhāva (the thought
that all are divine)

(च अस्ति) - and is

(असि) - are

You are the parama ekāntika bhakta.¹¹ You are engrossed in divyabhāva (the thought that all are divine). Your faith is unmoveable and is characterised by the highest form of unwavering conviction.¹² (17)

¹¹ The Akṣarabrahman guru is known, interchangeably, through such monikers as the param ekāntika bhakta, sādhu, satpuruṣa, ekāntika, guru, and mahāpuruṣa; at once embodying both Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, the guru is also known as brahmasvarūpa and guru-hari (see verses 163-64, 141).

¹² Developing such conviction, known as uttama nirvikalpa niścaya, is the singular goal of all spiritual praxis (Vacanāmṛta L-12; Swaminarayan 290-92).

ज्ञानयज्ञमयो नित्यं श्रीहर्याज्ञानुपालकः ।

व्यतियन्ति दिवारात्रं भगवत्कीर्तनादिषु ॥ १८ ॥

jñānayaajñamayo nityaṁ śrīharyājñānupālakaḥ,
vyatiyanti divārātraṁ bhagavatkīrtanādiṣu.

पदच्छेदः - ज्ञानयज्ञमयः, नित्यम्, श्रीहरिः, आज्ञानुपालकः, व्यतियन्ति, दिवारात्रम्,
भगवत्कीर्तनादिषु ॥

अन्वयः

(त्वम्) - you

(असि) - are

नित्यम् - continually

(भवतः) - your

ज्ञानयज्ञमयः - engrossed in
the jñānayaajña

दिवारात्रम् - days and nights

श्रीहर्याज्ञानुपालकः - one who
follows Shri Hari's (Bhag-
wan Swaminarayan's)
ordinances

भगवत्कीर्तनादिषु - in God's
kīrtana bhakti and other
such activities

व्यतियन्ति - pass

You are continually engrossed in the jñānayaajña.¹³ You follow Shri Hari's (Bhagwan Swaminarayan's) ordinances and spend your days and nights engaged in kīrtana-bhakti and other such devotional activities. (18)

¹³ The *Bhagavadgītā*'s fourth canto discusses many different types of yajñas, fore-
most of which is the jñānayaajña. Swaminarayan defines the jñānayaajña as the
cognitive practise of identifying oneself with Akṣarabrahman and offering
upāsana to Parabrahman (Vacanāmṛta GM-8; Swaminarayan 364–68).

श्रीहरिपरभावज्ञः सेव्योऽपि भगवानिव ।

वर्तसे त्वं सदादासः स्वामिसेवकभावतः ॥ १९ ॥

śrīhariparabhāvajñāḥ sevyo'pi bhagavāniva,
vartase tvam sadādāsaḥ svāmisevakabhāvataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - श्रीहरिपरभावज्ञः, सेव्यः, अपि, भगवान्, इव, वर्तसे, त्वम्, सदादासः,
स्वामिसेवकभावतः ॥

अन्वयः

(त्वम्) - you

अपि - also

श्रीहरिपरभावज्ञः - the knower
of Shri Hari's (Swamina-
rayan's) supreme greatness

स्वामिसेवकभावतः - with a
disposition like that of a
servant before his master

भगवान् - Paramātman

सदादासः - always a servant

इव - like

वर्तसे - behave

सेव्यः - worthy of being
served

You are the knower of Shri Hari's (Swaminarayan's) supreme greatness, and you are worthy of being served as Paramātman himself. Your manner is like that of a servant before his master; thus, you always behave like a humble servant. (19)

परमात्मस्वरूपस्य त्वं हि निश्चायको गुरुः ।

अनादिकर्मजा माया त्वयैव तु विदार्यते ॥ २० ॥

paramātmāsvarūpasya tvam hi niścāyako guruḥ,
anādikarmajā māyā tvayaiva tu vidāryate.

पदच्छेदः - परमात्मस्वरूपस्य, त्वम्, हि, निश्चायकः, गुरुः, अनादिकर्मजा, माया,
त्वया, एव, तु, विदार्यते ॥

अन्वयः

त्वम् - you

त्वया - by you

हि - indeed

एव - alone

परमात्मस्वरूपस्य - of
Paramātman's form

अनादिकर्मजा - born of time-
less karma

निश्चायकः - one who estab-
lishes conviction

माया - māyā

तु - certainly

गुरुः - the guru

विदार्यते - is revoked

(असि) - are

You indeed are the guru that establishes conviction in Paramātman's form. Certainly, you alone can revoke māyā, which is born of timeless karma. (20)

यथावत् प्रभुमाहात्म्यं धर्म एकान्तिकस्तथा ।

ब्रह्मभावः स्वसङ्गेन प्रस्थाप्यते मदात्मनि ॥ २१ ॥

yathāvat prabhumāhātmyaṁ dharma ekāntikastathā,
brahmabhāvaḥ svasaṅgena prasthāpyate madātmani.

पदच्छेदः - यथावत्, प्रभुमाहात्म्यम्, धर्मः, एकान्तिकः, तथा, ब्रह्मभावः, स्वसङ्गेन,
प्रस्थाप्यते, मदात्मनि ॥

अन्वयः

स्वसङ्गेन - through your
association

एकान्तिकः धर्मः - ekāntika
dharma

मदात्मनि - in my heart

तथा - and

प्रभुमाहात्म्यम् - Paramātman's
greatness

ब्रह्मभावः - brahmabhāva

प्रस्थाप्यते - are established

यथावत् - as it is

Your company thoroughly establishes Paramātman's greatness, ekāntika dharma,¹⁴ and brahmabhāva¹⁵ within my heart.
(21)

¹⁴ Ekāntika dharma is the pinnacle of spiritual achievement; it is characterised by the perfection of dharma, jñāna, vairāgya, and bhakti (see verses 148-60).

¹⁵ Brahmanbhāva is another way of describing spiritual perfection; it signifies the ātman's qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman. Other words for brahmabhāva are brahmasthiti and brāhmī sthiti. One who has attained this state is known as being brahmarūpa (see verses 145-47).

दिव्योऽसि मद्गुरुः साक्षात् त्वं परब्रह्मधारकः ।

मोक्षो ब्राह्मी स्थितिश्चैव कराग्रे ते प्रसङ्गतः ॥ २२ ॥

divyo'si madguruh sākṣāt tvam parabrahmadhāraḥ,
mokṣo brāhmī sthitiścaiva karāgre te prasaṅgataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - दिव्यः, असि, मद्गुरुः, साक्षात्, त्वम्, परब्रह्मधारकः, मोक्षः, ब्राह्मी,
स्थितिः, च, एव, कराग्रे, ते, प्रसङ्गतः ॥

अन्वयः

(त्वम्) - you

मोक्षः - liberation

साक्षात् - directly

ब्राह्मी स्थितिः - the state of
being brahmarūpa

परब्रह्मधारकः - one who
beholds Parabrahman

च - and

दिव्यः - divine

कराग्रे - in the palm of the
hand

मद्गुरुः - my guru

एव - just

असि - are

(अस्ति) - is

ते प्रसङ्गतः - through your
communion

You directly behold Parabrahman within you. You are di-
vine, and you are my guru. Through your communion, libera-
tion and the state of being brahmarūpa rest in the palm of my
hand. (22)

एवं ध्यात्वा त्वदाज्ञायामनुवृत्तौ च वर्तनम् ।
 सर्वथा सर्वदा भूयात् प्रार्थये भद्रभावतः ॥ २३ ॥

evaṃ dhyātvā tvadājñāyāmanuvṛttau ca vartanam,
 sarvathā sarvadā bhūyāt prārthaye bhadrabhāvataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - एवम्, ध्यात्वा, त्वदाज्ञायाम्, अनुवृत्तौ, च, वर्तनम्, सर्वथा, सर्वदा,
 भूयात्, प्रार्थये, भद्रभावतः ॥

अन्वयः

(अहम्) - I	सर्वदा च - and always
एवम् - in this way	(मम) - my
ध्यात्वा - having meditated	वर्तनम् - behaviour
त्वदाज्ञायाम् अनुवृत्तौ च - with- in your ordinances and wishes	भूयाद् - may be (इति) - the aforementioned
सर्वथा - in every way	भद्रभावतः - auspiciously प्रार्थये - pray

Having meditated upon you in this way, I auspiciously pray
 that I may always act according to your divine ordinances and
 wishes in every way. (23)

शुद्धभावेन यो भक्तो ब्रह्ममन्ता भवेद् हृदा ।

साक्षात्कुर्यात् परं ब्रह्म ब्रह्मरूपे निजात्मनि ॥ २४ ॥

śuddhabhāvena yo bhakto brahmamantā bhaved hṛdā,
sākṣātkuryāt paraṁ brahma brahmarūpe nijātmani.

पदच्छेदः - शुद्धभावेन, यः, भक्तः, ब्रह्ममन्ता, भवेत्, हृदा, साक्षात्कुर्यात्, परम्,
ब्रह्म, ब्रह्मरूपे, निजात्मनि ॥

अन्वयः

यः भक्तः - the devotee who

(सः) - such a devotee

शुद्धभावेन - with sincerity

ब्रह्मरूपे निजात्मनि - in their

हृदा - from the heart

brahmarūpa ātman

ब्रह्ममन्ता - one who medi-
tates on Akṣarabrahman

परं ब्रह्म - Parabrahman

साक्षात्कुर्यात् - realises

भवेत् - becomes

A devotee who meditates on the Akṣarabrahman guru with heartfelt sincerity will realise Parabrahman in their brahmarūpa ātman. (24)

1.6 Abhyarthanā

Lastly, the author offers his prayers to Mahant Swami Maharaj, who is Swaminarayan's sixth successor and the manifest, Akṣarabrahman guru.

गुरुरेव मम ध्यानं व्याख्यानं मे गुरुः सदा ।

गुरुरेव मम ज्ञानं सुगानं गुरुरेव च ॥ २५ ॥

gurureva mama dhyānaṁ vyākhyānaṁ me guruḥ sadā,
gurureva mama jñānaṁ sugānaṁ gurureva ca.

पदच्छेदः - गुरुः, एव, मम, ध्यानम्, व्याख्यानम्, मे, गुरुः, सदा, गुरुः, एव, मम,
ज्ञानम्, सुगानम्, गुरुः, एव, च ॥

अन्वयः

सदा - at all times	एव - alone
गुरुः - the guru	मम - my
एव - alone	ज्ञानम् - the object of wisdom
मम - my	दोम
ध्यानम् - the object of meditation	गुरुः - the guru
	च - and
गुरुः - the guru	एव - alone
(एव) - alone	(मे) - my
मे - my	सुगानम् - the object of poetic verses
व्याख्यानम् - the object of speech	(अस्ति) - is
गुरुः - the guru	

The guru alone is forever the core of my meditations. The guru alone is the subject of my speech. The guru alone is the centre of my knowledge. The guru alone is the locus of my poetic verses. (25)

महन्तस्वामिनं नौमि ब्रह्मविद्याप्रबोधकम् ।

निर्वैरं परमं शान्तं कृपालुं मे गुरुं प्रियम् ॥ २६ ॥

mahantasvāminam naumi brahmavidyāprabodhakam,
nirvairam paramam śāntam kṛpāluṃ me guraṃ priyam.

पदच्छेदः - महन्तस्वामिनम्, नौमि, ब्रह्मविद्याप्रबोधकम्, निर्वैरम्, परमम्, शान्तम्,
कृपालुम्, मे, गुरुम्, प्रियम् ॥

अन्वयः

निर्वैरम् - one who is absent
of enmity

परमम् - utmost

शान्तम् - one who is peace-
ful

कृपालुम् - compassionate

ब्रह्मविद्याप्रबोधकम् - one who
gives people the knowl-
edge of brahmavidyā.

मे - my

प्रियम् - dear

गुरुम् - guru

महन्तस्वामिनम् - to Mahant
Swami

(अहम्) - I

नौमि - bow

I bow to my dear guru Mahant Swami Maharaj, the torch-
bearer of brahmavidyā; he harbours enmity towards none, expe-
riences utmost peace, and is compassionate. (26)

1.7 The Swaminarayan Mantra's Significance

श्रीहरिः सहजानन्दः स्वयमुपदिदेश यम् ।
स्वामिनारायणं मन्त्रं गर्भितं ब्रह्मविद्यया ॥ २७ ॥

śrīhariḥ sahajānandaḥ svayamupadideśa yam,
svāminārāyaṇaṁ mantram garbhitam brahmavidyayā.

पदच्छेदः - श्रीहरिः, सहजानन्दः, स्वयम्, उपदिदेश, यम्, स्वामिनारायणम्, मन्त्रम्,
गर्भितम्, ब्रह्मविद्यया ॥

अन्वयः

श्रीहरिः - Shri Hari	मन्त्रम् - mantra
सहजानन्दः - Sahajanand (Bhagwan Swaminarayan)	उपदिदेश - taught (तम्) - this
स्वयम् - himself	ब्रह्मविद्यया - with brahma- vidyā ¹⁸
यम् - that	
स्वामिनारायणम् - Swamina- rayan	गर्भितम् - embedded with (अस्ति) - is

The Swaminarayan mantra was given by Shri Hari Sahajanand (Bhagwan Swaminarayan) himself. The concept of brahmavidyā¹⁶ is embedded in this mantra. (27)

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16 Muṇḍakopaniṣad 1.2.13 defines brahmavidyā as the knowledge of Akṣara and Puruṣottama (Bhadreshdas, *Upaniṣat-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam*, Vol.1, 256-57). This very knowledge of brahmavidyā is also encapsulated within the Swaminarayan mantra, as described in verse 28 of the present text.

अक्षरं ब्रह्म विज्ञेयं मन्त्रे स्वामीति शब्दतः ।

नारायणेति शब्देन तत्परः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ २८ ॥

akṣaram brahma vijñeyam mantre svāmīti śabdataḥ,
nārāyaṇeti śabdena tatparaḥ puruṣottamaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - अक्षरम्, ब्रह्म, विज्ञेयम्, मन्त्रे, स्वामी, इति, शब्दतः, नारायण, इति,
शब्देन, तत्परः, पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

अन्वयः

(तस्मिन्) मन्त्रे - in this

mantra

स्वामी इति - 'Svāmī'

शब्दतः - from [this] word

अक्षरं ब्रह्म - Akṣarabrahman

विज्ञेयम् - should be under-
stood

नारायण इति - 'Nārāyaṇa'

शब्देन - from [this] word

तत्परः - that which is above

Akṣarabrahman

पुरुषोत्तमः - Puruṣottama

(विज्ञेयः) - should be under-
stood.

In this mantra, the word 'Svāmī' should be understood to signify Akṣarabrahman and the word 'Nārāyaṇa' should be understood to denote Puruṣottama, who is above Akṣarabrahman. (28)

1.8 The Five Eternal Entities

जीवस्तथेश्वरो माया ब्रह्म परमब्रह्म च ।

नित्याः सत्याः सदैवैते मिथो भिन्नाः स्वरूपतः ॥ २९ ॥

jīvastatheśvaro māyā brahma paramabrahma ca,
nityāḥ satyāḥ sadaivaite mitho bhinnāḥ svarūpataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - जीवः, तथा, ईश्वरः, माया, ब्रह्म, परमब्रह्म, च, नित्याः, सत्याः, सदा,
एव, एते, मिथः, भिन्नाः, स्वरूपतः ।

अन्वयः

जीवः - the jīva	सदा - eternally
ईश्वरः - the īśvara	एव - indeed
माया - māyā	नित्याः - eternal
ब्रह्म - Akṣarabrahman	सत्याः - true
तथा - and	स्वरूपतः - inherently
परब्रह्म - Parabrahman	मिथः च - and from one another
एते - these	भिन्नाः - distinct
(पदार्थाः) - entities	

The entities of the jīva, īśvara, māyā, Akṣarabrahman, and Parabrahman are eternal, true, and ontologically distinct from one another. (29)

स्वामिनारायणेनैवं पदार्थाः पञ्च कीर्तिताः ।

यज्ज्ञानात् कृत्स्नतां याति ब्रह्मविद्याऽपवर्गदा ॥ ३० ॥

svāminārāyaṇenaivaṃ padārthāḥ pañca kīrtitāḥ,
yajññānāt kṛtsnatām yāti brahmavidyā'pavargadā.

पदच्छेदः - स्वामिनारायणेन, एवम्, पदार्थाः, पञ्च, कीर्तिताः, यज्ज्ञानात्,
कृत्स्नताम्, याति, ब्रह्मविद्या, अपवर्गदा ॥

अन्वयः

स्वामिनारायणेन - by Swami-
narayan

एवम् - in this way

पञ्च पदार्थाः - five entities

कीर्तिताः - proclaimed

यज्ज्ञानाद् - by whose knowl-
edge

अपवर्गदा - that which gives
liberation

ब्रह्मविद्या - brahmavidyā

कृत्स्नताम् - fulfilment

याति - attains

Bhagwan Swaminarayan proclaimed five entities in this way; understanding these entities leads to the fulfilment of brahmavidyā, which grants liberation. (30)

In 2008, Brahmaswarup Pramukh Swami Maharaj wrote a letter encompassing Bhagwan Swaminarayan's Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. Here, the author describes this letter as the basis for the Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā.

सत्यसिद्धान्तसर्वस्वं सहजानन्दबोधितम् ।
अभ्यलिखत् स्वयं पत्रे स्वाऽक्षरैः प्रमुखो गुरुः ॥ ३१ ॥

satyasiddhāntasarvasvaṃ sahajānandabodhitam,
abhyalikhat svayaṃpatre svā'kṣaraiḥ pramukho guruḥ.

पदच्छेदः - सत्यसिद्धान्तसर्वस्वम्, सहजानन्दबोधितम्, अभ्यलिखत्, स्वयम्, पत्रे,
स्वाऽक्षरैः, प्रमुखः, गुरुः ॥

अन्वयः

गुरुः - Guru	सत्यसिद्धान्तसर्वस्वम् - the
प्रमुखः - Pramukh Swami Maharaj	bounty in the form of this truthful principle
स्वाऽक्षरैः - in his own handwriting	स्वयम् - himself
	पत्रे - in a letter
सहजानन्दबोधितम् - taught by Sahajanand	अभ्यलिखत् - wrote

Sahajanand Swami (Bhagwan Swaminarayan) revealed an extraordinary bounty in the form of this truthful principle, which Guru Pramukh Swami Maharaj penned in a letter written in his own handwriting. (31)

पत्रव्याख्यानरूपोऽयं सुधाग्रन्थो हि केवलम् ।
तदुपदेशवाक्यानां स्यान्मननमहोत्सवः ॥ ३२ ॥

patravyākhyānarūpo'yaṁ sudhāgrantho hi kevalam
tadupadeśavākyaṇām syānmananamahotsavaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - पत्रव्याख्यानरूपः, अयम्, सुधाग्रन्थः, हि, केवलम्, तदुपदेशवाक्यानाम्,
स्यात्, मननमहोत्सवः ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् - this

हि - indeed

सुधाग्रन्थः - text known as
the *Sudhā*

तदुपदेशवाक्यानाम् - of its
teachings

केवलम् - merely

मननमहोत्सवः - a reflective
celebration

पत्रव्याख्यानरूपः - in the
form of an explanation of
this letter

स्यात् - is

This text, known as the *Sudhā*,¹⁷ is merely an explanation of this letter. Indeed, it is but a reflective celebration of its teachings. (32)

¹⁷ The *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*.

एवं परब्रह्मस्वामिनारायणप्रबोधित-ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुणातीतगुरुपरम्परोपबृंहित-
 ब्रह्मविद्यालक्षणाऽक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनप्रतिपादके
 साधुभट्टेशदासविरचिते
 स्वामिनारायणसिद्धान्तसुधाऽऽख्ये शास्त्रेऽस्मिन्
 समाप्तं मङ्गलधारा नाम
 प्रथमं प्रकरणम् ॥

In this way ends the first chapter, known as the 'Maṅgala-dhārā', of Sadhu Bhadresha's *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sūdhā*, a text that substantiates the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, which is characterised as brahmavidyā, was taught by Parabrahman Swaminarayan, and has been fostered by the lineage of brahmasvarūpa, guṇātīta gurus.

Chapter 2

Akṣarabrahma-dhārā

2.1 Introduction

One of the most distinctive features of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana is its acceptance of a divine entity known as Akṣarabrahman that is ontologically distinct from the omnipotent Puruṣottama. Recognising, understanding, and associating with this entity, according to the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, is key to realising Puruṣottama's greatness and attaining liberation.

Bhadreshdas Swami thus begins his discussion of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana by explaining Akṣarabrahman's nature, form, and significance. Thereafter, he celebrates Akṣarabrahman's presence on earth today in the form of the brahmasvarūpa guru.

The knowledge of Akṣarabrahman was, indeed, ensconced in the Vedas and Upaniṣads, Bhadreshdas writes. However, it was Parabrahman Swaminarayan and his successor Gunatitanand Swami (Guṇātītānanda Svāmī), the manifest form of Akṣarabrahman, who first brought this knowledge to light through their teachings.

Bhadreshdas next offers an etymological analysis of the word 'Akṣarabrahman', explaining that 'Akṣara' signifies the entity's ubiquity and immutability, whereas 'Brahman' signifies

its extraordinary pervasiveness. He explains that Akṣarabrahman is rightfully named as such, given that it is immutable and more pervasive than the jīva, īśvara, and māyā. Indeed, only Paramātmān transcends this entity. Paramātmān is thus known as Parabrahman (literally, that which is superior to Akṣarabrahman).

Thereafter, the author describes Akṣarabrahman's four forms: (1) the cidākāśa, (2) the divine abode, (3) the servant in the divine abode, and (4) the manifest guru.

The first of these four forms, the cidākāśa, pervades and sustains all of creation. The second form, the abode, is where liberated beings go to eternally enjoy Paramātmān's bliss in the afterlife. The third of the forms listed above is that which serves Paramātmān in Akṣaradhāman. The fourth is that which comes to earth as the guru. This Akṣarabrahman guru is a vessel through which Paramātmān engages with people on earth, acts as an ideal for spiritual seekers, and grants liberation.

Upon denoting Akṣarabrahman's four forms, the author clarifies that the distinctions presented here are merely due to Akṣarabrahman's various service roles; intrinsically Akṣarabrahman is but one existential entity.

The author concludes by stating Akṣarabrahman's prevalence in the śāstras. Specifically, he says that there is not a single Upaniṣad nor a single chapter from the *Brahmasūtras*, the *Bhagavadgītā*, or the *Vacanāmṛta* that does not mention Akṣarabrahman's glory.

In this way, Bhadreshdas begins his discussion of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana by explicating Akṣarabrahman, the most definitive and distinctive element informing the darśana's orthodoxy.

2.2 Benediction

The Akṣarabrahma-dhārā begins with entreaties that venerate Akṣarabrahman and pronounce this entity's significant role in spiritual praxis:

गुणातीतं गुरुं प्राप्य ब्रह्म रूपं निजात्मनः ।
विभाव्य दासभावेन स्वामिनारायणं भजे ॥ ३३ ॥

guṇātītaṁ gurum prāpya brahma rūpaṁ nijātmanah,
vibhāvya dāsabhāvena svāminārāyaṇaṁ bhaje.

पदच्छेदः - गुणातीतम्, गुरुम्, प्राप्य, ब्रह्म, रूपम्, निजात्मनः, विभाव्य, दासभावेन, स्वामिनारायणम्, भजे ॥

अन्वयः

(अहं) - I	ब्रह्म रूपम् - brahmarūpa
गुणातीतम् - the guṇātīta	विभाव्य - believing
गुरुम् - guru	दासभावेन - with humility
प्राप्य - having attained	स्वामिनारायणम् - Swamina- rayan
निजात्मानः - my ātman	भजे - worship

I humbly worship Bhagwan Swaminarayan, having attained the guṇātīta guru and believing my ātman to be brahmarūpa.
(33)

ब्राह्मी स्थितिर्यतः सिद्ध्येत् प्राकट्यं परब्रह्मणः ।

ब्रह्माक्षरं गुरुं वन्दे साक्षात् सिद्धान्तरूपिणम् ॥ ३४ ॥

brāhmī sthitiryataḥ siddhyet prākṛtyaṁ parabrahmaṇaḥ,
brahmākṣaraṁ guruṁ vande sāksāt siddhāntarūpiṇam.

पदच्छेदः - ब्राह्मी, स्थितिः, यतः, सिद्ध्येत्, प्राकट्यम्, परब्रह्मणः, ब्रह्म, अक्षरम्,
गुरुम्, वन्दे, साक्षात्, सिद्धान्तरूपिणम् ॥

अन्वयः

यतः - through whom	(तादृशम्) - such
ब्राह्मी - related to	साक्षात् - the very
Akṣarabrahman	सिद्धान्तरूपिणम् - embodier
स्थितिः - state	of the [Akṣara-Puruṣotta-
सिद्ध्येत् - can be achieved	ma] philosophy
परब्रह्मणः (च) - and	ब्रह्माक्षरम् - to the
Parabrahman's	Akṣarabrahman
(यतः) - through whom	गुरुम् - guru
प्राकट्यम् - manifestation	(अहम्) - I
(भवेत्) - occurs	वन्दे - bow

I bow to the Akṣarabrahman guru, through whom one can attain the Brāhmic state, through whom Parabrahman manifests, and who is the very embodiment of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama philosophy. (34)

2.3 Novelty

The following two verses describe Bhagwan Swaminarayan and his first successor, Akṣarabrahman Gunatitanand Swami, enriching Indian philosophy by elucidating the entity of Akṣarabrahman.

वेदवेदान्तशास्त्रेषु प्रच्छन्नं गूढमक्षरम् ।
प्रथममुज्जुघोषाऽत्र स्वामिनारायणो भुवि ॥ ३५ ॥

vedavedāntaśāstreṣu pracchannaṃ gūḍhamakṣaram,
prathamamujjughoṣā'tra svāminārāyaṇo bhuvi.

पदच्छेदः - वेदवेदान्तशास्त्रेषु, प्रच्छन्नम्, गूढम्, अक्षरम्, प्रथमम्, उज्जुघोष, अत्र,
स्वामिनारायणः, भुवि ॥

अन्वयः

वेदवेदान्तशास्त्रेषु - in the	(तत्) - it
Vedas and Upaniṣads	स्वामिनारायणः - Swamina-
गूढम् - esoteric	rayan
अक्षरम् - Akṣarabrahman	अत्र - here
(तत्त्वम्) - the entity	भुवि - in the world
प्रच्छन्नम् - concealed	प्रथमम् - first
(आसीत्) - was	उज्जुघोष - declared

The esoteric entity of Akṣarabrahman was concealed within the Vedas and Upaniṣads. It was first revealed to the world by Bhagwan Swaminarayan. (35)

स्वीयोपदेशवार्तासु गुणातीतेन ब्रह्मणा ।

स्वरूपं स्वयमेवोक्तं तस्माद् ब्रह्म प्रमाणितम् ॥ ३६ ॥

svīyopadeśavārtāsu guṇātītena brahmaṇāsvarūpaṃ,
svayamevoktaṃ tasmād brahma pramāṇitam.

पदच्छेदः - स्वीयोपदेशवार्तासु, गुणातीतेन, ब्रह्मणा, स्वरूपम्, स्वयम्, एव, उक्तम्,
तस्मात्, ब्रह्म, प्रमाणितम् ॥

अन्वयः

गुणातीतेन - by Gunatitanand Swami	स्वयम् - himself एव - indeed
ब्रह्मणा - [who was] the form of Akṣarabrahman	उक्तम् - was explained तस्मात् - therefore
स्वीयोपदेशवार्तासु - in his own teachings	ब्रह्म - Akṣarabrahman प्रमाणितम् - was verified
स्वरूपम् - the form [of Akṣarabrahman]	

Moreover, Akṣarabrahman Gunatitanand Swami himself explained, and thereby verified, Akṣarabrahman's form within his own discourses.¹⁸ (36)

¹⁸ Gunatitanand Swami's discourses were compiled in the form of a text known as the Svāmīni Vāto.

2.4 Akṣarabrahman's Soteriological Significance

The author then explains Akṣarabrahman's foundational significance for those trotting on the spiritual path.

परोपासनसिद्ध्यर्थं ब्रह्मभावाऽऽप्तये तथा ।

निर्विघ्नभक्तिसम्पत्तयै ब्रह्मज्ञानमपेक्षितम् ॥ ३७ ॥

paropāsanāsiddhyartham brahmabhāvā'ptaye tathā,
nirvighnabhaktisampattyai brahmajñānamapekṣitam.

पदच्छेदः - परोपासनसिद्ध्यर्थम्, ब्रह्मभावाऽऽप्तये, तथा, निर्विघ्नभक्तिसम्पत्तयै,
ब्रह्मज्ञानम्, अपेक्षितम् ॥

अन्वयः

परोपासनसिद्ध्यर्थम् - to attain
Parabrahman's upāsana.

निर्विघ्नभक्तिसम्पत्तयै - to attain
unhindered bhakti

ब्रह्मभावाऽऽप्तये - to attain
brahmabhāva

ब्रह्मज्ञानमपेक्षितम् - knowledge
of Akṣarabrahman is

तथा - and

required

Knowledge of Akṣarabrahman is required to attain Parabrahman's upāsana, brahmabhāva, and unhindered bhakti.¹⁹
(37)

¹⁹ Bhadrēśha explains in the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sūdhā* (p.307-15) that the verse 'brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati' (Mundakopaniṣad 3.2.9) posits that one who knows Akṣarabrahman becomes like Akṣarabrahman. The verse explicated above, while enumerating the necessity of attaining oneness with Akṣarabrahman, also puts forth some of the most significant qualities of one who attains this state.

2.5 An Etymological Analysis

Having established Akṣarabrahman's importance, the author elucidates the two words that make up the entity's name, 'Akṣara' and 'Brahman', based on Saṃskṛta grammar and linguistics.

अश्नोतेव्यापनार्थाद्धि नञ्पूर्वात्क्षरतेस्तथा ।

व्युत्पन्नोऽक्षरशब्दोऽयं ब्रह्मण्येव प्रयुज्यते ॥ ३८ ॥

aśnotervyāpanārthāddhi nañpūrvātkṣaratestathā,
vyutpanno'kṣaraśabdo'yaṃ brahmaṇyeva prayujyate.

पदच्छेदः - अश्नोतेः, व्यापनार्थात्, हि, नञ्पूर्वात्, क्षरतेः, तथा, व्युत्पन्नः,
अक्षरशब्दः, अयम्, ब्रह्मणि, एव, प्रयुज्यते ॥

अन्वयः

अश्नोतेः व्यापनार्थात् - from
the meaning of the verb
aśnoti reflecting perva-
siveness

हि - certainly

तथा - and

नञ्पूर्वात् क्षरतेः - from the
verb kṣarati, preceded by
the prefix 'nañ'

व्युत्पन्नः - to be derived

अयम् अक्षरशब्दः - this word,
'Akṣara'

ब्रह्मणि - in the sense of
Akṣarabrahman

एव - indeed

प्रयुज्यते - is used

The word 'Akṣara' is derived either from the verb 'aśnoti', which means to pervade, or 'kṣarati', preceded by the prefix 'nañ' (together, pervading and not subsiding). Accordingly, the word 'Akṣara' is used to describe Akṣarabrahman. (38)

सर्वजीवेश्वरेभ्यश्च मायातन्मुक्ततस्तथा ।

बृहत्त्वाद् बृंहणत्वाच्च ब्रह्मेत्यक्षरमुच्यते ॥ ३९ ॥

sarvajīveśvarebhyaśca māyātanmuktatastathā,
br̥hattvād br̥ṇḥaṇatvācca brahmetyakṣaramucyate.

पदच्छेदः - सर्वजीवेश्वरेभ्यः, च, मायातन्मुक्ततः, तथा, बृहत्त्वात्, बृंहणत्वात्, च, ब्रह्म, इति, अक्षरम्, उच्यते ॥

अन्वयः

सर्वजीवेश्वरेभ्यः - than all of the jīvas and īśvaras	बृंहणत्वात् च - and because it is more pervasive
तथा च - and also	अक्षरम् - Akṣara
मायातन्मुक्ततः - than māyā and those who are free of it	ब्रह्म - Brahman इति - as the aforemen- tioned
बृहत्त्वात् - because it is more pervasive	उच्यते - is known

Akṣarabrahman is more pervasive than all of the jīvas, īśvaras, māyā, and those who are free of māyā. Therefore, it is known as 'Brahman'.²⁰ (39)

²⁰It is common practice in Saṃskṛta to define nouns based on the verbs from which they stem. The *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* argues that the word 'Brahman' originates from either of the synonymous root verbs 'br̥ha' and 'br̥hi' (Bhadreshdas 19), which the Pāṇinian Saṃskṛta tradition defines as 'vṛddhi', or 'growth' (Jha 31). The *Siddhānta-sudhā* then goes on to explain that Akṣarabrahman is larger in scope than the jīva, īśvara, and māyā, and so is correctly referred to as 'Brahman'.

तत्परः परमात्माऽस्ति परब्रह्मेति शब्दितः ।

शब्दसमयमाश्रित्य मुख्यार्थ उपवर्णितः ॥ ४० ॥

tatparaḥ paramātma'sti parabrahmeti śabditah,
śabdasaṁmayamāśritya mukhyārtha upavarṇitah.

पदच्छेदः - तत्परः, परमात्मा, अस्ति, परब्रह्म, इति, शब्दितः, शब्दसमयम्,
आश्रित्य, मुख्यार्थः, उपवर्णितः ॥

अन्वयः

तत्परः - greater than this
entity

परमात्मा - Paramātman

परब्रह्म - Parabrahman

इति - as

शब्दितः - called

अस्ति - is

शब्दसमयम् - principles
related to words and their
interpretation

आश्रित्य - adhering to

मुख्यार्थः - the primary
meaning

उपवर्णितः - has been ex-
plained.

Paramātman, who is greater than Akṣarabrahman, is identified as Parabrahman. The primary meaning of these words ['Akṣara' and 'Brahman'] have hence been etymologically explicated according to the principles of classical Indian hermeneutics. (40)

2.6 Akṣarabrahman's Virtues & Figure

Having explained the meaning of the terms 'Akṣara' and 'Brahman', the author now describes Akṣarabrahman's form and nature.

परस्माद् ब्रह्मणो भिन्नं तदेकाधीनतायुतम् ।

नित्यमेकं गुणातीतं मायाधिपं च चेतनम् ॥ ४१ ॥

parasmād brahmaṇo bhinnam tadekādhīnatāyutam,
nityamekaṁ guṇātītaṁ māyāधिपam ca cetanam.

पदच्छेदः - परस्मात्, ब्रह्मणः, भिन्नम्, तदेकाधीनतायुतम्, नित्यम्, एकम्,
गुणातीतम्, मायाधिपम्, च, चेतनम् ॥

अन्वयः

(अक्षरब्रह्म) - Akṣarabrah-
man

नित्यम् - eternal

एकम् - unique

परस्माद् ब्रह्मणः - from
Parabrahman

गुणातीतम् - guṇātīta

भिन्नम् - distinct

मायाधिपम् - māyā's control-
ler

(अस्ति) - is

चेतनम् - sentient

तदेकाधीनतायुतम् - possesses
dependancy only to it

च - and

(अस्ति) - is

Akṣarabrahman is distinct from Parabrahman and is dependent only upon Parabrahman.²¹ It is eternal, unique, and guṇātīta; it is māyā's controller and is sentient. (41)

²¹ The *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* eloquently discusses Akṣarabrahman's metaphysical identity as being above all but subordinate to Parabrahman on the basis of the Muṇḍakopaniṣad's seminal mantra, 'akṣarāt parataḥ paraḥ' and the *Bhagavadgītā*'s eighth and fifteenth cantos (Bhadreshdas 23-25, 41; 28-32).

श्रेयोऽनन्तगुणैर्युक्तं मायादोषविवर्जितम् ।
बृहत्त्वात् सगुणं प्रोक्तं सूक्ष्मत्वान्निर्गुणं तथा ॥ ४२ ॥

śreyo'nantagūṇairyuktaṃ māyādoṣavivarjitam,
br̥hattvāt saguṇaṃ proktaṃ sūkṣmatvānnirgūṇaṃ tathā.

पदच्छेदः - श्रेयोऽनन्तगुणैः, युक्तम्, मायादोषविवर्जितम्, बृहत्त्वात्, सगुणम्,
प्रोक्तम्, सूक्ष्मत्वात्, निर्गुणम्, तथा ॥

अन्वयः

श्रेयोऽनन्तगुणैः - with infinite redemptive qualities	तथा - and
युक्तम् - is possessed	मायादोषविवर्जितम् - free of flaws that arise from māyā
(अक्षरब्रह्म) - Akṣarabrah- man	(तदेव अक्षरब्रह्म) - this very Akṣarabrahman
बृहत्त्वात् - due to persasive- ness	सूक्ष्मत्वात् - due to subtle- ness
सगुणम् - saguṇa	निर्गुणम् - nirgūṇa
प्रोक्तम् - is known as	प्रोक्तम् - is known as

Akṣarabrahman is known as being saguṇa because it possesses infinite redemptive qualities and is pervasive. It is described as being nirgūṇa, on the other hand, because it is subtle and free of flaws that arise from māyā.²² (42)

²² 'Guṇa' means quality. This verse explains that Akṣarabrahman is saguṇa (with qualities) and nirgūṇa (without qualities), respectively, because 1) It possesses infinite redemptive qualities, such as bhakti, humility, and compassion, yet is free from flaws arising from māyā; and 2) It possesses the specific quality of pervasiveness when seen from the perspective of its omnipresence, yet does not appear to possess this quality when seen from the perspective of its subtle form.

उपादानं निमित्तं च तद्धि सर्जनकारणम् ।
आधारो व्यापकं सृष्टेरन्तर्यामि नियामकम् ॥ ४३ ॥

upādānaṃ nimittaṃ ca taddhi sarjanakāraṇam,
ādhāro vyāpakam sṛṣṭerantaryāmi niyāmakam.

पदच्छेदः - उपादानम्, निमित्तम्, च, तद्, हि, सर्जनकारणम्, आधारः, व्यापकम्,
सृष्टेः, अन्तर्यामि, नियामकम् ॥

अन्वयः

तद् - it (Akṣarabrahman)	व्यापकम् - that which per-
हि - certainly	vades
उपादानम् - material	अन्तर्यामि - that which
निमित्तं च - and efficient	resides within
सर्जनकारणम् - cause of	नियामकम् - that which
creation	controls
सृष्टेः - of creation	च - and
आधारः - sustainer	(अस्ति) - is

Akṣarabrahman is both the efficient and material cause of creation.²³ It also pervades and sustains creation. Furthermore, it resides within all as the controller. (43)

²³ Indian philosophers often use the analogy of an earthen pot to describe material and efficient causes. The pot's material cause is the clay that forms the pot's raw substance; the potter who facilitates the pot's creation is the pot's efficient cause. Similarly, Akṣarabrahman is creation's material cause because it pervades and sustains; it is the efficient cause because it initiates the process of creation. It is important to note, however, that Akṣarabrahman serves in both of these capacities according to Parabrahman's will.

2.7 One Entity with Four Forms

Now, the four forms of Akṣarabrahman are enumerated. Namely, these four forms are the cidākāśa, the divine abode, the servant in the divine abode, and the manifest guru.

चतुर्धाऽवस्थितिर्ज्ञेया कार्यभेदान्न तत्त्वतः ।

मुक्तिसृष्टिलयाद्यर्थमेकस्यैवाऽक्षरस्य तु ॥ ४४ ॥

caturdhā'vasthitiṛjñeyā kāryabhedānna tattvataḥ,
muktisṛṣṭilayādyarthamekasyaivā'kṣarasya tu.

पदच्छेदः - चतुर्धा, अवस्थितिः, ज्ञेया, कार्यभेदात्, न, तत्त्वतः, मुक्तिसृष्टिलयाद्यर्थम्, एकस्य, एव, अक्षरस्य, तु ॥

अन्वयः

मुक्तिसृष्टिलयाद्यर्थम् - for liberation, creation, destruction, and other such tasks

एकस्य - of one

एव - indeed

अक्षरस्य - Akṣara

तु - indeed

कार्यभेदात् - due to variation in service roles

चतुर्धा - four

अवस्थितिः - forms

ज्ञेया - should be known

न - not

तत्त्वतः - ontologically

Akṣarabrahman is indeed only one, yet it appears in four forms. These forms do not reflect an ontological difference but merely signify the entity's various service roles, such as those it assumes in the various service of liberation, creation, and destruction. (44)

चिदाकाशस्तथा देशस्तद्देशस्थश्च सेवकः ।

गुरुर्ब्रह्मस्वरूपश्च चतस्रो ब्रह्मणो विधाः ॥ ४५ ॥

cidākāśastathā deśastaddeśasthaśca sevakaḥ,
gururbrahmasvarūpaśca catasro brahmaṇo vidhāḥ.

पदच्छेदः - चिदाकाशः, तथा, देशः, तद्देशस्थः, च, सेवकः, गुरुः, ब्रह्मस्वरूपः,
च, चतस्रः, ब्रह्मणः, विधाः ॥

अन्वयः

चिदाकाशः - the cidākāśa	गुरुः - guru
तथा - and	(इति) - thereby
देशः - abode	ब्रह्मणः - Akṣarabrahman's
तद्देशस्थः च - and within that abode	चतस्रः - four
सेवकः - servant	विधाः - forms
ब्रह्मस्वरूपः च - and the brahmasvarūpa	(सन्ति) - are

Akṣarabrahman's four forms are the cidākāśa, the divine abode, the servant in that abode, and the brahmasvarūpa guru.²⁴
(45)

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24 The *Svaminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sūdhā* discusses Akṣarabrahman's four forms at length through an edifying dialectic that provides about 300 references from the Prasthānatrayī, the larger Vedic canon, and the Vacanāmṛta (Bhadreshdas 47-84).

Of Akṣarabrahman's four forms, the author first explicates the cidākāśa, which pervades and sustains creation. His elucidation, in particular, makes note of the Upaniṣads' description of this form.

छान्दोग्ये दहराऽऽकाशश्चिदाकाशः प्रकीर्तितः ।

सकलहृद्गुहावर्ती यदन्तः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ ४६ ॥

chāndogye daharā'kāśaścīdākāśaḥ prakīrtitaḥ,
sakalahṛdguhāvartī yadantaḥ puruṣottamaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - छान्दोग्ये, दहराऽऽकाशः, चिदाकाशः, प्रकीर्तितः, सकलहृद्गुहावर्ती, यदन्तः, पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

अन्वयः

छान्दोग्ये - in the Chāndogya [Upaniṣad]	सकलहृद्गुहावर्ती - that which resides in the hearts of all
चिदाकाशः - the cidākāśa	यदन्तः च - and within which
दहराऽऽकाशः (इति) - as 'daharākāśa'	पुरुषोत्तमः - Puruṣottama
प्रकीर्तितः - is described as	(विराजते) - resides

The Chāndogyopaniṣad refers to Akṣarabrahman's cidākāśa form as 'daharākāśa'. It describes it as residing in the heart of every being and shows Puruṣottama as residing within it.²⁵ (46)

तदेव याज्ञवल्क्योक्तौ गार्गीप्रश्नोत्तरे स्थितम् ।
निखिललोककालादेर्ब्रह्माक्षरं प्रशासकम् ॥ ४७ ॥

tadeva yājñavalkyoktau gārgīpraśnottare sthitam,
nikhilalokakālāderbrahmākṣaram praśāsakam.

पदच्छेदः - तद्, एव, याज्ञवल्क्योक्तौ, गार्गीप्रश्नोत्तरे, स्थितम्, निखिललोककालादेः,
ब्रह्माक्षरम्, प्रशासकम् ॥

अन्वयः

तद् - this (Akṣarabrah-
man's cidākāśa form)

स्थितम् - appears

(तत्र) - there

एव - itself

ब्रह्माक्षरम् - Akṣarabrahman

(बृहदारण्यके) - in the
Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad

निखिललोककालादेः - of all of
the realms, time, etc.

गार्गीप्रश्नोत्तरे - in the answer
to Gārgī's question

प्रशासकम् - the controller

याज्ञवल्क्योक्तौ - in Yā-
jñavalkya's words

(निरूपितम्) - is described as

This cidākāśa form of Akṣarabrahman is explained in Yā-
jñavalkya's response to Gārgī's question [in the Bṛhadāraṇyako-
paniṣad]. Akṣarabrahman is described there to be the controller
of everything, including all realms and time.²⁶ (47)

²⁶ Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 3.8.8-11; Bhadrēśdhas, *Upaniṣat-svāminārāyaṇa-
bhāṣyam*, Vol.2, 190-99.

Akṣarabrahman appears in its second form as Paramātman's residence, which is known as Akṣaradhāman. The nature of this form is described in the following three verses.

ब्रह्मेशः सहजानन्दः स्वयं ब्रह्माक्षरं तथा ।

मुक्ताश्च यत्र तिष्ठन्ति ह्यक्षरधाम कीर्तितम् ॥ ४८ ॥

brahmeśaḥ sahajānandaḥ svayaṁ brahmākṣaraṁ tathā,
muktāśca yatra tiṣṭhanti hyakṣaradhāma kīrtitam.

पदच्छेदः - ब्रह्मेशः, सहजानन्दः, स्वयम्, ब्रह्माक्षरम्, तथा, मुक्ताः, च, यत्र, तिष्ठन्ति, हि, अक्षरधाम, कीर्तितम् ॥

अन्वयः

ब्रह्मेशः - the master of
Akṣarabrahman

सहजानन्दः - Sahajanand
(Swaminarayan)

च - and

स्वयम् - itself

ब्रह्माक्षरम् - Akṣarabrah-
man

तथा - and

मुक्ताः - liberated beings

यत्र - where

तिष्ठन्ति - reside

(तद्) - that

हि - indeed

अक्षरधाम - Akṣaradhāman

कीर्तितम् - is known as

The residence of the liberated beings, of Akṣarabrahman itself, and of Swaminarayan, who is the master of Akṣarabrahman, is indeed known as Akṣaradhāman. (48)

मनुष्याकारतस्तद्धि साकृतिकं भवेत् सदा ।

तस्य चतुर्षु पार्श्वेषु नैकब्रह्माण्डसंस्थितिः ॥ ४९ ॥

manuṣyākāratastaddhi sākṛtikam bhavet sadā,
tasya catuṣṣu pārśveṣu naikabrahmāṇḍasamsthitiḥ.

पदच्छेदः - मनुष्याकारतः, तत्, हि, साकृतिकम्, भवेत्, सदा, तस्य, चतुर्षु, पार्श्वेषु,
नैकब्रह्माण्डसंस्थितिः ॥

अन्वयः

तत् - that

भवेत् - is

हि - certainly

तस्य - its

सदा - always

चतुर्षु - in [all] four

मनुष्याकारतः - by being that
which possesses a human
figure

पार्श्वेषु - sides
नैकब्रह्माण्डसंस्थितिः - the
existence of countless

साकृतिकम् - with a form

brahmāṇḍas³¹

By possessing a human figure, it is forever sākāra (with form). Countless brahmāṇḍas²⁷ reside on all four of its sides.²⁸
(49)

²⁷ A unit of creation.

²⁸ The *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* establishes that Akṣaradhāman possesses a definite form and is thus an actual place by referring to Prasthānatrayī verses that describe this abode using words such as 'loka' (Prašnopaniṣad 1.15), 'dhāman' (Muṇḍakopaniṣad 3.2.4, *Gītā* 8.21, 15.6), 'pada' (*Gītā* 8.11, 15.4-5), 'sthāna' (*Gītā* 8.28), and 'śadman' (Kāṭhopaniṣad, 2.14) (Bhadreshdas 57-60).

नास्त्यपरः परो लोको ह्यस्माद्ध्यक्षरधामतः ।
यतो विराजते नित्यम् अत्र पराऽक्षरात् परः ॥ ५० ॥

nāstyaparah paro loko hyasmāddhyakṣaradhāmataḥ,
yato virājate nityam atra parā'kṣarāt parah.

पदच्छेदः - नास्ति, अपरः, परः, लोकः, हि, अस्माद्, हि, अक्षरधामतः, यतः,
विराजते, नित्यम्, अत्र, पराऽक्षरात्, परः ॥

अन्वयः

अस्माद् - other than this	नास्ति - does not exist
हि - indeed	यतः - because
अक्षरधामतः - Akṣaradhāman	अत्र - here
परः - above	पराऽक्षरात् परः - that which is above Akṣarabrahman, which is above all
अपरः - other	
लोकः - realm	नित्यम् - eternally
हि - indeed	विराजते - resides

There is no abode superior to this Akṣaradhāman. Indeed, Akṣaradhāman is supreme because that which is superior to the transcendent entity of Akṣarabrahman²⁹ eternally resides here. (50)

²⁹The phrase 'parā'kṣarāt parah', which describes Parabrahman, is a direct reference to the term 'parātparah', which appears in Praśnopaniṣad 5.5 and Muṇḍakopaniṣad 3.2.8 in reference to Parabrahman. Parabrahman is similarly described in Muṇḍakopaniṣad 2.1.2 as 'akṣarātparah parah' (Bhadreshdas, *Upaniṣat-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam*, Vol.1 218–19, 297–98, 258–61). See also verse 80 of the present text.

The author now describes Akṣarabrahman's third form, which acts as Paramātmā's servant in the divine abode and is instrumental in initiating creation.

सहजानन्दसेवायां धाम्नि यद् राजते सदा ।

साकृति चेतनं ह्येकं सर्वाङ्गदिव्यविग्रहम् ॥ ५१ ॥

sahajānandasevāyāṃ dhāmni yad rājate sadā,
sākṛti cetanaṃ hyekaṃ sarvāṅgādīvyavīgraham.

पदच्छेदः - सहजानन्दसेवायाम्, धाम्नि, यद्, राजते, सदा, साकृति, चेतनम्, हि,
एकम्, सर्वाङ्गदिव्यविग्रहम् ॥

अन्वयः

धाम्नि - in Akṣaradhāman

सदा - always

सहजानन्दसेवायाम् - in Saha-
janand's (Swaminarayan's)
service

यद् - which

राजते - resides

(तत्) - that

(अक्षरब्रह्मणः) - Akṣarabrah-
man's

(सेवकरूपम्) - servant form

सर्वाङ्गदिव्यविग्रहम् - that
which has a body whose
every part is divine

साकृति - that which pos-
sesses a human figure

चेतनम् - that which is
sentient

(च) - and

एकम् - that which is
unique

हि - certainly

Within Akṣaradhāman is the form of Akṣarabrahman that eternally serves Swaminarayan. It is sentient, unique, and possesses a human figure whose every part is divine. (51)

सिसृक्षुः सहजानन्दः प्रथमतस्तदीक्षते ।

तदपि मुक्तवृन्दं च ह्येवं तत् सृष्टिकारणम् ॥ ५२ ॥

sisṛkṣuḥ sahajānandaḥ prathamatastadīkṣate,
tadapi muktavṛndaṃ ca hyevaṃ tat sṛṣṭikāraṇam.

पदच्छेदः - सिसृक्षुः, सहजानन्दः, प्रथमतः, तत्, ईक्षते, तत्, अपि, मुक्तवृन्दम्, च,
हि, एवम्, तत्, सृष्टिकारणम् ॥

अन्वयः

सिसृक्षुः - wishing to create	अपि - in turn
सहजानन्दः - Sahajanand (Swaminarayan)	मुक्तवृन्दम् - at the multi- tude of liberated beings
प्रथमतः - at first (before creation)	(ईक्षते) - looks
तत् - at it (this form of Akṣarabrahman)	एवम् - in this way
ईक्षते - looks	हि - indeed
च - and	तत् - it (Akṣarabrahman)
तत् - that (this form of Akṣarabrahman)	सृष्टिकारणम् - the cause of creation
	(विद्यते) - is

When Swaminarayan wishes to create, he first looks towards this form of Akṣarabrahman. In turn, Akṣarabrahman looks towards the multitude of liberated beings [and selects one of these beings to be responsible for creation]. In this way, indeed, Akṣarabrahman plays a causal role in the process of cosmogenesis. (52)

Akṣarabrahman's fourth form is the guru, who is always manifest on earth. Upon arguing that the previous three forms are difficult to attain, the author praises this fourth form by saying that it is accessible to all. He then expands on its nature and its role in spiritual praxis.

गुरुरक्षरब्रह्मैव दिव्यो दिव्यतनोधरः ।

नारायणस्वरूपं च सम्प्रदायाऽभिरक्षकः ॥ ५३ ॥

gururakṣarabrahmaiva divyo divyatanordharah,
nārāyaṇasvarūpaṁ ca sampradāyā'bhirakṣakah.

पदच्छेदः - गुरुः, अक्षरब्रह्म, एव, दिव्यः, दिव्यतनोः, धरः, नारायणस्वरूपम्, च, सम्प्रदायाऽभिरक्षकः ॥

अन्वयः

अक्षरब्रह्म - Akṣarabrahman	धरः - he who takes upon
एव - indeed	नारायणस्वरूपम् - the form of
दिव्यः - divine	Nārāyaṇa
गुरुः - the guru	सम्प्रदायाऽभिरक्षकः च - and
(अस्ति) - is	the guardian of the sam-
दिव्यतनोः - of a divine body	pradāya
	(अस्तिः) - is

This very entity of Akṣarabrahman takes upon a sacred, human form and serves as the holy guru. He is the form of Nārāyaṇa and the guardian of the sampradāya.³⁰ (53)

³⁰ The guru protects and fosters the sampradāya's traditions and is thus described as its guardian.

परमात्मा तु तत्रैव सम्यक् सदा विराजते।

स्वप्राकट्याऽनुभूत्यर्थं नृणां भक्ताऽनुकम्पया ॥ ५४ ॥

paramātmā tu tatraiva samyak sadā virājate,
svaprakāṭyā'nubhūtyartham nṛṇāṃ bhaktā'nukampayā.

पदच्छेदः - परमात्मा, तु, तत्र, एव, सम्यक्, सदा, विराजते, स्वप्राकट्याऽनुभूत्यर्थम्,
नृणाम्, भक्ताऽनुकम्पया ॥

अन्वयः

परमात्मा - Paramātman

तु - indeed

भक्ताऽनुकम्पया - out of com-
passion for devotees

तत्र - there (within the
Akṣarabrahman guru)

नृणाम् - people's

एव - certainly

स्वप्राकट्यानुभूत्यर्थं - for the
experience of his manifes-
tation

सम्यक् - entirely

सदा - eternally

विराजते - resides

(च) - and

Out of compassion for devotees, Paramātman indeed re-
sides in the Akṣarabrahman guru entirely and eternally, en-
abling people to experience his manifestation. (54)

यथा ब्रह्मगुरौ वासः स्वामिनारायणप्रभोः ।

नैवाऽन्यत्र तथा क्वापि पात्राणां तारतम्यतः ॥ ५५ ॥

yathā brahmagurau vāsaḥ svāminārāyaṇaprabhoḥ,
naivā'nyatra tathā kvāpi pātrāṇāṃ tāratamyataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - यथा, ब्रह्मगुरौ, वासः, स्वामिनारायणप्रभोः, न, एव, अन्यत्र, तथा, क्व,
अपि, पात्राणाम्, तारतम्यतः ॥

अन्वयः

पात्राणाम् - of vessels

वासः - presence

तारतम्यतः - due to gradation

तथा - in the same way

न - not

यथा - the way in which

एव - indeed

ब्रह्मगुरौ - in the
Akṣarabrahman guru

क्वापि अन्यत्र - anywhere else

(भवति) - occurs

स्वामिनारायणप्रभोः - Bhagwan
Swaminarayan's

Bhagwan Swaminarayan does not reside anywhere else as he does in the Akṣarabrahman guru. This is because of the gradation inherent in sentient beings.³¹ (55)

31 Aside from Parabrahman, Akṣarabrahman is the foremost ontological entity. It has also been eternally free of māya and thus stands alongside Parabrahman as the purest entity. Due to these and other reasons, Parabrahman is most fully present in Akṣarabrahman (Vacanāmṛta GP-4r; Swaminarayan 73-76).

नारायणस्वरूपत्वाद् ध्येयो ब्रह्माऽक्षरं गुरुः ।

नित्यमास्ते यतस्तस्मिन् सम्यङ् नारायणो हरिः ॥ ५६ ॥

nārāyaṇasvarūpatvād dhyeyo brahmā'kṣaraṃ guruḥ,
nityamāste yatastasmin samyannārāyaṇo hariḥ.

पदच्छेदः - नारायणस्वरूपत्वात्, ध्येयः, ब्रह्माऽक्षरम्, गुरुः, नित्यम्, आस्ते, यतः,
तस्मिन्, सम्यक्, नारायणः, हरिः ॥

अन्वयः

यतः - because

नारायणः हरिः - Nārāyaṇa

Hari (Bhagwan Swamina-
rayan)

तस्मिन् (गुरौ) - within the
guru

नित्यम् - eternally

सम्यग् - entirely

आस्ते - resides

नारायणस्वरूपत्वाद् - as the
form of Nārāyaṇa

ब्रह्माऽक्षरम् - Akṣarabrah-
man

गुरुः - the guru

ध्येयः - is worthy of being
meditated upon.

Parabrahman Swaminarayan, in his entirety, eternally re-
sides within the Akṣarabrahman guru.³² Hence, this guru is the
form of Nārāyaṇa and is thus worthy of being meditated upon.³³
(56)

³² See verse 72.

³³ Vacanāmṛta V-5; Swaminarayan 506.

ब्रह्म मानवरूपेण जायत इति बुध्यते ।
आदर्शं तन्मुमुक्षूणां जीवनवर्तनादिषु ॥ ५७ ॥

brahma mānavarūpeṇa jāyata iti budhyate,
ādarśaṁ tanmumukṣūṇāṁ jīvanavartanādiṣu.

पदच्छेदः - ब्रह्म, मानवरूपेण, जायते, इति, बुध्यते, आदर्शम्, तत्, मुमुक्षूणाम्,
जीवनवर्तनादिषु ॥

अन्वयः

ब्रह्म - Akṣarabrahman	जीवनवर्तनादिषु - in matters
मानवरूपेण - by way of a	related to lifestyle and
human form	actions
जायते - is born	मुमुक्षूणाम् - for spiritual
इति - thus	seekers
बुध्यते - is known	आदर्शम् - an ideal
तत् - it (Akṣarabrahman)	(भवति) - is

Akṣarabrahman is thus known to be born in human form;³⁴ through this form, Akṣarabrahman's lifestyle and actions serve as an ideal for spiritual seekers.³⁵ (57)

³⁴ Vacanāmṛta GP-71; Swaminarayan 141-45.

³⁵ Vacanāmṛta GP-67; Swaminarayan 132-33.

जन्म कर्म सदा दिव्यमक्षराधिपतेर्यथा ।

तथैव तु विजानीयाद् ब्रह्माऽक्षरगुरोरिह ॥ ५८ ॥

janma karma sadā divyamakṣarādhīpateryathā,
tathaiva tu vijānīyād brahmākṣaragurorīha.

पदच्छेदः - जन्म, कर्म, सदा, दिव्यम्, अक्षराधिपतेः, यथा, तथा, एव, तु,
विजानीयात्, ब्रह्माऽक्षरगुरोः, इह ॥

अन्वयः

यथा - Just as

तथा - in the same way

अक्षराधिपतेः - the ruler of
Akṣara's

एव - indeed

इह - here (on earth)

जन्म - birth

ब्रह्माऽक्षरगुरोः - the

कर्म (च) - and actions

Akṣarabrahman guru's

सदा - eternally

तु - certainly

दिव्यम् - divine

विजानीयात् - should be
known

Just as the life and actions of Paramātman, the ruler of Akṣarabrahman, are known to be eternally divine, the same should be known about the life and actions of the Akṣarabrahman guru presently manifest on earth. (58)

2.8 Akṣarabrahman's Prevalence in the Śāstras

तादृगुपनिषन्नास्ति गीताऽध्यायो न विद्यते।
 अध्यायो ब्रह्मसूत्रे च प्रकरणं वचोऽमृते ॥ ५९ ॥
 ब्रह्माऽक्षरस्य दिव्यस्य यद्धि योगं विना भवेत्।
 ब्रह्माऽतो संस्मरेन्नित्यं ब्रह्मभावाय भक्तये ॥ ६० ॥

tādṛgupaniṣannāsti gītā'dhyāyo na vidyate,
 adhyāyo brahmasūtre ca prakaraṇaṁ vaco'mṛte.

brahmā'kṣarasya divyasya yaddhi yogaṁ vinā bhavet,
 brahmā'to saṁsmarennityaṁ brahmabhāvāya bhaktaye.

पदच्छेदः - तादृक्, उपनिषत्, न, अस्ति, गीताऽध्यायः, न, विद्यते, अध्यायः,
 ब्रह्मसूत्रे, च, प्रकरणम्, वचोऽमृते ॥ ब्रह्माऽक्षरस्य, दिव्यस्य, यद्, हि, योगम्,
 विना, भवेत्, ब्रह्म, अतः, संस्मरेत्, नित्यम्, ब्रह्मभावाय, भक्तये ॥

अन्वयः

दिव्यस्य ब्रह्माऽक्षरस्य - of the	न विद्यते - does not exist
divine Akṣarabrahman	ब्रह्मसूत्रे - in the <i>Brahmasūtra</i>
यत् - that which	अध्यायः - a chapter
हि - indeed	(न विद्यते) - does not exist
योगम् - contact	वचोऽमृते च - and in the
विना - without	Vacanāmṛta
तादृक् - such	प्रकरणम् - a chapter
उपनिषत् - an Upaniṣad	(न विद्यते) - does not exist
न अस्ति - does not exist	अतः - therefore
गीताऽध्यायः - a canto of the	ब्रह्मभावाय - for attaining
<i>Gītā</i>	brahmabhāva

भक्तये (च) - and for bhakti

नित्यम् - incessantly

ब्रह्म - on Akṣarabrahman

संस्मरेत् - one should meditate

There is not one Upaniṣad or chapter of the *Gītā*, *Brahmasūtra*, or *Vacanāmṛta* that does not relate to the glory of the divine Akṣarabrahman. Thus, for attaining bhakti and brahmabhāva, one should incessantly meditate on Akṣarabrahman. (59-60)

एवं परब्रह्मस्वामिनारायणप्रबोधित-ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुणातीतगुरुपरम्परोपबृंहित-
 ब्रह्मविद्यालक्षणाऽक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनप्रतिपादके
 साधुभद्रेशदासविरचिते
 स्वामिनारायणसिद्धान्तसुधाऽऽख्ये शास्त्रेऽस्मिन्
 समाप्तमक्षरब्रह्मधारा नाम
 द्वितीयं प्रकरणम् ॥

In this way ends the second chapter, known as the 'Akṣarabrahma-dhārā', of Sadhu Bhadreshaḍas' *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*, a text that substantiates the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, which is characterised as brahmavidyā, was taught by Parabrahman Swaminarayan, and has been fostered by the lineage of brahmasvarūpa, guṇātīta gurus.

Chapter 3

Parabrahma-dhārā

3.1 Introduction

Knowledge of Akṣarabrahman is necessary for one who wishes to understand Parabrahman and secure liberation. Having described Akṣarabrahman's form and significance in the previous chapter, the author thus goes on to elaborate upon Parabrahman. He first describes Parabrahman's virtues and form, explaining that Parabrahman is omniscient, compassionate, above māyā, unique, and unmatched. He also puts forth that Parabrahman is eternally served by Akṣarabrahman and the released beings in his divine abode, Akṣaradhāman. He then says that Parabrahman is also pervasive, despite being eternally present in his abode.

The author further discusses Parabrahman's role in creation, describing Parabrahman as the material and efficient cause of all and the entity that gifts living beings with life and the ability to know, desire, and act. He also describes Parabrahman as the entity that grants beings the fruits of their karma.

Bhadreshdas then explicates the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's philosophy of divine manifestation, saying that this very Parabrahman comes to earth as Swaminarayan himself to liberate people from the cycle of births and deaths. The author

further declares the darśana's teaching that this very entity of Parabrahman Swaminarayan alone is worthy of being offered the highest form of upāsana.

Thereafter, the author presents an intriguing dialectic wherein he first posits that Parabrahman, indeed, possesses a human form. He then answers prima facie claims that put forth Upaniṣadic verses to show Parabrahman to be formless. Specifically, he says that such statements that appear in the śāstras are not blanket claims that negate Parabrahman's form altogether, but that they are mere negations of Parabrahman having a worldly form.

He then goes on to describe Parabrahman's pre-eminence. He further says that Bhagwan Swaminarayan stays present on earth through the lineage of Akṣarabrahman gurus after his passing and that divyabhāva (an understanding of inherent divinity) in his manifest form leads to liberation.

In this way, the 'Parabrahma-dhārā' examines the nature of Parabrahman's form and manifestation and considers its implications.

3.2 Benediction

The Parabrahma-dhārā commences with obeisance to Parabrahman Bhagwan Swaminarayan. While adhering to the tradition of recalling God's name at the commencement of an undertaking, this benediction also explains why the ultimate entity is known by the name of Swaminarayan.

सहितः स्वामिना नित्यमास्ते नारायणो हरिः ।

स्वामिनारायणस्तस्मात् कीर्त्यते समुपास्यते ॥ ६१ ॥

sahitaḥ svāminā nityamāste nārāyaṇo hariḥ,
svāminārāyaṇastasmāt kīrtyate samupāsyate.

पदच्छेदः - सहितः, स्वामिना, नित्यम्, आस्ते, नारायणः, हरिः, स्वामिनारायणः,
तस्मात्, कीर्त्यते, समुपास्यते ॥

अन्वयः

नारायणः - Nārāyaṇa	तस्मात् - therefore
हरिः - Hari	स्वामिनारायणः - Swamina- rayan
स्वामिना सहितः - with Svāmī	कीर्त्यते - is known as
नित्यम् - eternally	समुपास्यते - is worshipped
आस्ते - presides	

Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa (Parabrahman Swaminarayan) eternally presides along with Svāmī (Akṣarabrahman). Thus, he is known and worshipped as ‘Swaminarayan’.³⁶ (61)

³⁶ The Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana reads the name ‘Swaminarayan’, as well as the Swaminarayan mantra, according to the madhyamapadalopī compound formation, which is embedded with the instrumental tatpuruṣa compound, according to Kātyāyana vārtika 1310 and Pāṇini sūtra 2.1.13 (Govindācārya 105, 99). When the name is divided into its constituent parts, it reads as such: svāminā sahito nārāyaṇa iti svāminārāyaṇaḥ.

3.3 Parabrahman's Divine Virtues & Figure

परमात्मा परं ब्रह्म सर्वेश्वरेश्वरो हरिः ।

नारायणश्च सर्वज्ञः कृपालुः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ ६२ ॥

paramātmā paraṁ brahma sarveśvareśvaro hariḥ,
nārāyaṇaśca sarvajñaḥ kṛpāluḥ puruṣottamaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - परमात्मा, परम्, ब्रह्म, सर्वेश्वरेश्वरः, हरिः, नारायणः, च, सर्वज्ञः,
कृपालुः, पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

अन्वयः

परं ब्रह्म - Parabrahman

परमात्मा - Paramātmā

पुरुषोत्तमः - Puruṣottama

नारायणः - Nārāyaṇa

हरिः - Hari

सर्वेश्वरेश्वरः - Sarveśvareś-
vara

सर्वज्ञः - the all-knower

कृपालुः - compassionate

च - and

(वर्तते) - is

Parabrahman is also known as Paramātmā, Puruṣottama, Nārāyaṇa, Hari, Sarveśvareśvara and the compassionate, all-knower.³⁷ (62)

³⁷ The terms used in this verse to describe Parabrahman, rooted in the Prasthānatrayī, reflect much about the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's beliefs about the ultimate entity and the darśana's metaphysics. For instance, the term 'Parabrahman', which appears in Praśnopaniṣad 5.2, indicates God's distinctness from and superiority to Akṣarabrahman; 'Paramātmā', which is seen in Gītā 15.17, suggests that God is distinct from and superior to the ātman; 'Puruṣottama', appearing in Gītā 15.18, suggests that he is distinct from and superior to the jīva, īśvara, and Akṣarabrahman, which the Gītā describes as puruṣas; and 'Sarveśvareśvara', which stems from Śvetāśvataropaniṣad 6.7, indicates that he is distinct from and superior to the īśvaras. By elucidating Parabrahman in this way, the author makes note of both Parabrahman's supremacy and the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's teaching of four ontologically distinct sentient entities.

मायाऽतीतश्च निर्दोषः साकृतिर्मानवाऽऽकृतिः ।

नित्यः सर्वसमुत्कृष्ट एकोऽयं नैव तत्समः ॥ ६३ ॥

māyā'tītaśca nirdoṣaḥ sākr̥tirmānavā''kr̥tiḥ,
nityaḥ sarvasamutkr̥ṣṭa eko'yaṁ naiva tatsamaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - मायाऽतीतः, च, निर्दोषः, साकृतिः, मानवाऽऽकृतिः, नित्यः,
सर्वसमुत्कृष्टः, एकः, अयम्, न, एव, तत्समः ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् (परमात्मा) - this here

च - and

Paramātman

नित्यः - one who is eternal

मायाऽतीतः - one who is
above māyā

एकः - one who is unique

निर्दोषः - one who is free of
flaws

एव - indeed

साकृतिः - one who possesses
a form

सर्वसमुत्कृष्टः - one who is
superior to all

मानवाऽऽकृतिः - one who is
of human form

तत्समः - one who is equal
to him

न (अस्ति) - does not exist

This here Paramātman is above māyā, is untouched by flaws, possesses a human form, and is eternal. He is unique and greatly superior to all; no one is equal to him. (63)

दिव्यगुणविशिष्टोऽयं मायिकगुणवर्जितः ।

अन्तर्यामी सर्वकर्ता गुणाऽतीतो नियामकः ॥ ६४ ॥

divyaguṇaviśiṣṭo'yaṁ māyikaguṇavarjitah,
antaryāmī sarvakartā guṇā'tīto niyāmakah.

पदच्छेदः - दिव्यगुणविशिष्टः, अयम्, मायिकगुणवर्जितः, अन्तर्यामी, सर्वकर्ता,
गुणाऽतीतः, नियामकः ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् (परमात्मा) - This here
Paramātman

अन्तर्यामी - one who resides
in all³⁸

दिव्यगुणविशिष्टः - one who
possesses divine virtues

सर्वकर्ता - one who is the
omniagent

मायिकगुणवर्जितः - one who is
free of māyic flaws

गुणाऽतीतः - one who is
above māyā's qualities

नियामकः - one who governs

Paramātman possesses divine virtues and is free of worldly attributes. He resides within all,³⁹ is the omniagent, and is beyond māyā. He is the controller of all. (64)

³⁸ The word antaryāmīn, which is formed from the indeclinable 'antar' and the root verb 'yam', denotes both pervasiveness and governance. Paramātman is described at length in this way and using these terms in Bṛhadāraṇyako-paniṣad 3.7.1-23 (Bhadreshdas, *Upaniṣat-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam*, Vol.2, 177-86).

मूर्तिमद्ब्रह्मणा नित्यं मुक्तैस्तद्भावभावितैः ।
सेव्यते दासभावेन ह्यक्षरधामसंस्थितः ॥ ६५ ॥

mūrtimadbrahmaṇā nityaṁ muktaistadbhāvabhāvitaiḥ,
sevyate dāsabhāvena hyakṣaradhāma-saṁsthitaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - मूर्तिमद्ब्रह्मणा, नित्यम्, मुक्तैः, तद्भावभावितैः, सेव्यते, दासभावेन,
हि, अक्षरधामसंस्थितः ॥

अन्वयः

अक्षरधामसंस्थितः - that
which resides in
Akṣaradhāman

(परमात्मा) - Paramātman

नित्यम् - eternally

मूर्तिमद्ब्रह्मणा - by the per-
sonal form of Akṣarabrah-
man

तद्भावभावितैः मुक्तैः (च) - and
by those liberated beings
who have attained quali-
tative oneness with it (i.e.
with Akṣarabrahman)

दासभावेन - humbly

हि - indeed

सेव्यते - is served

In Akṣaradhāman, Paramātman is humbly served by the personal form of Akṣarabrahman and the countless liberated beings that have attained qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman. (65)

उपादानं निमित्तं च कारणं जगतो मतः ।

सर्वाधारः स्वतन्त्रश्च कर्ता हर्ता नियामकः ॥ ६६ ॥

upādānaṃ nimittaṃ ca kāraṇaṃ jagato mataḥ,
sarvādhāraḥ svatantraśca kartā hartā niyāmakaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - उपादानम्, निमित्तम्, च, कारणम्, जगतः, मतः, सर्वाधारः, स्वतन्त्रः,
च, कर्ता, हर्ता, नियामकः ॥

अन्वयः

(परमात्मा) - Paramātman

जगतः - creation's

उपादानम् - material

निमित्तं च - and efficient⁴⁰

कारणम् - cause

मतः - is known as

सर्वाधारः - one who is the
sustainer of all

स्वतन्त्रः - one who is inde-
pendent

कर्ता - the creator

हर्ता - the destroyer

नियामकः च - and the con-
troller

He is known as creation's material and efficient cause.³⁹ He sustains all and is the creator, destroyer, and controller. (66)

³⁹ See footnote 23 for an explanation of material and efficient causes.

As part of his discussion of Parabrahman's form and nature, the author explains Parabrahman's pervasive (anvaya) and distinct (vyatireka) forms. In particular, he says that the pervasive form is present everywhere, whereas the distinct form resides specifically in Akṣaradhāman, the divine abode.

स्वधामस्थित एवाऽयं सकलाऽन्विततां गतः ।

व्यतिरिक्तोऽन्वितोऽपीह स्वामिनारायणो हरिः ॥ ६७ ॥

svadhāmasthita evā'yaṁ sakalā'nvitatām gataḥ,
vyatirikto'nvito'pīha svāminārāyaṇo hariḥ.

पदच्छेदः - स्वधामस्थितः, एव, अयम्, सकलाऽन्वितताम्, गतः, व्यतिरिक्तः, अन्वितः, अपि, इह, स्वामिनारायणः, हरिः ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् - This here

गतः - enjoys

स्वामिनारायणः हरिः - Bhagwan Swaminarayan

(पुनश्च) - moreover

अन्वितः - pervasive

स्वधामस्थितः - one who resides in his sacred abode

अपि - although

इह - here (in the divine abode)

एव - indeed

सकलाऽन्वितताम् - pervasiveness in all

व्यतिरिक्तः - distinct

(प्रवर्तते) - is

Even while residing in his sacred abode, Bhagwan Swaminarayan pervades all. And while pervading creation, he remains distinct in his abode. (67)

मनुष्यादिजनेर्दाता सर्वकर्मफलप्रदः ।
सर्वज्ञानक्रियेच्छानां शक्तेर्दाता दयाऽन्वितः ॥ ६८ ॥

manuṣyādijanerdātā sarvakarmaphalapradah,
sarvajñānakriyecchānām śakterdātā daya'nvitah.

पदच्छेदः - मनुष्यादिजनेः, दाता, सर्वकर्मफलप्रदः, सर्वज्ञानक्रियेच्छानाम्, शक्तेः,
दाता, दयाऽन्वितः ॥

अन्वयः

दयाऽन्वितः - he who is com-
passionate

(परमात्मा) - Paramātman

मनुष्यादिजनेः - of birth to
humans and other beings

दाता - the giver

सर्वकर्मफलप्रदः - one who is
the giver of the fruits of
all karma

सर्वज्ञानक्रियेच्छानां शक्तेः - of
the power to know, act,
and desire

दाता (च) - and the giver

The compassionate Paramātman grants birth to humans and other beings, gives of them the fruits of their karma, and bestows upon them the power to know, act, and desire. (68)

3.4 Manifestation as Swaminarayan

दिव्यसंकल्पमात्रेण नैकानामुद्दिधीर्षया ।
सकलैश्वर्यसम्पन्नो धाम्नि सन्नेव जायते ॥ ६९ ॥

divyasaṁkalpamātreṇa naikānamuddidhīrṣayā,
sakalaiśvryasampanno dhāmnī sanneva jāyate.

पदच्छेदः - दिव्यसंकल्पमात्रेण, नैकानाम्, उद्दिधीर्षया, सकलैश्वर्यसम्पन्नः,
धाम्नि, सन्, एव, जायते ॥

अन्वयः

(परमात्मा) - Paramātman	धाम्नि - in the divine abode
नैकानाम् (आत्मनाम्) - of countless souls	सन् - being
उद्दिधीर्षया - through the desire to liberate	एव - indeed
दिव्यसंकल्पमात्रेण - only by way of [his own] sacred wish	सकलैश्वर्यसम्पन्नः - one who possesses all divine pow- ers
	जायते - takes birth

Paramātman comes to earth bearing all of his divine powers;⁴⁰ his descent occurs through his own sacred wish to liberate countless beings.⁴¹ All the while, he continues to reside in his divine abode. (69)

⁴⁰Bhadreshdas' statement that Paramātman comes to earth bearing all his divine virtues is a direct reference to a number of Vacanāmṛta discourses, such as GP-71, GA-31 (Swaminarayan 141–45, 610–12), which express that Paramātman does not become lesser by taking upon a 'human' form. See also verse 84 of the present text.

⁴¹By positing that Paramātman takes birth independently, this verse counters the prima facie view that Paramātman is born due to karma.

स एव सहजानन्दः स्वामिनारायणो हरिः ।

परमात्मा परं ब्रह्म भक्तिजो धर्मनन्दनः ॥ ७० ॥

sa eva sahajānandaḥ svāminārāyaṇo hariḥ,
paramātmā paraṁ brahma bhaktijo dharmanandanaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - सः, एव, सहजानन्दः, स्वामिनारायणः, हरिः, परमात्मा, परम्, ब्रह्म,
भक्तिजः, धर्मनन्दनः ॥

अन्वयः

सः - this

एव - very

परं ब्रह्म - Parabrahman

परमात्मा - Paramātmā

भक्तिजः - the son of Bhakti

धर्मनन्दनः - the giver of joy
to Dharma

स्वामिनारायणः हरिः - Bhag-
wan Swaminarayan

सहजानन्दः - Sahajanand

(अस्ति) - is

This very Parabrahman Paramātmā is Bhagwan Swaminarayan, or Sahajanand Swami, the son of Bhakti and Dharma.⁴²
(70)

⁴² See footnote 3 under verse 2.

स एव परमोपास्यो भजनीयश्च भावतः ।

जप्यश्चाऽऽश्रयणीयश्च कीर्तनीयश्च सर्वदा ॥ ७१ ॥

sa eva paramopāsyō bhajanīyaśca bhāvataḥ,
japyaścā”śrayaṇīyaśca kīrtanīyaśca sarvadā.

पदच्छेदः - सः, एव, परमोपास्यः, भजनीयः, च, भावतः, जप्यः, च, आश्रयणीयः,
च, कीर्तनीयः, च, सर्वदा ॥

अन्वयः

सः - he	सर्वदा - for all times
एव - alone	कीर्तनीयः च - and worthy of being praised
परमोपास्यः - is worthy of being offered supreme upāsanā	जप्यः च - and worthy of being chanted
भावतः च - and out of passion	आश्रयणीयः च - and wor- thy of being gone to for shelter
भजनीयः - worthy of being worshipped	

He alone is worthy of being offered supreme upāsanā, passionate worship, and everlasting praise. His name alone is worthy of being chanted. He alone is worthy of being the ultimate refuge.⁴³ (71)

43 Singular devotion, or avyabhicāriṇi bhakti, is imperative to the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's orthopraxy, as expressed in the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* (Bhadreshdas 352-53). Swaminarayan explains this concept in the *Vacanāmṛta* by saying that a devotee should remain loyal to their iṣṭadeva just as a faithful wife, whom he calls a pativrata strī, is singularly dedicated to her partner. He adds, however, that a devotee who is loyal to one iṣṭadeva should still offer obeisance to other deities and should disparage none (L-11, GM-19, GA-16, 38; Swaminarayan 290, 401-02, 577-78, 627).

Verses 69-70 explained that Parabrahman manifested as Swaminarayan and that he alone is worthy of worship. The Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana also teaches, however, that Parabrahman stays on earth perennially even after Swaminarayan's passing. This eternal manifestation occurs through the Akṣarabrahman guru, as described below.

स एव प्रकटो नित्यं प्रत्यक्षे ब्रह्मणि गुरौ ।

सहितः सकलैश्वर्यैः सम्यगानन्ददायकः ॥ ७२ ॥

sa eva prakāṭo nityaṁ pratyakṣe brahmaṇi gurau,
sahitaḥ sakalaiśvaryaīḥ samyagānandadāyakaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - सः, एव, प्रकटः, नित्यम्, प्रत्यक्षे, ब्रह्मणि, गुरौ, सहितः, सकलैश्वर्यैः,
सम्यक्, आनन्ददायकः ॥

अन्वयः

सः - he

एव - himself

सम्यक् - in every way

आनन्ददायकः - the giver of
bliss

सकलैश्वर्यैः सहितः - along

with all of his divine
virtues

प्रत्यक्षे ब्रह्मणि गुरौ - in the
manifest, Akṣarabrahman
guru

नित्यम् - eternally

प्रकटः - is manifest

The giver of absolute bliss, Parabrahman Swaminarayan himself is eternally present on earth along with all of his divine virtues through the manifest, Akṣarabrahman guru.⁴⁴ (72)

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⁴⁴ See also verses 54-6 in Chapter 2.

3.5 Premise for Creation

The author now explains that Paramātmā creates the universes to engender liberation.

कल्याणं परमं भूयान्नैकजीवेश्वराऽऽत्मनाम् ।
इदमेकं कृपालोस्तु सृष्टौ प्रयोजनं मतम् ॥ ७३ ॥

kalyāṇaṁ paramaṁ bhūyānnaikajīveśvara’ātmanām,
idamekaṁ kṛpālostu sṛṣṭau prayojanaṁ matam.

पदच्छेदः - कल्याणम्, परमम्, भूयात्, नैकजीवेश्वराऽऽत्मनाम्, इदम्, एकम्,
कृपालोः, तु, सृष्टौ, प्रयोजनम्, मतम् ॥

अन्वयः

कृपालोः (परमात्मनः) - the
compassionate Paramāt-
man’s

तु - indeed

सृष्टौ - in creation

इदम् - this

एकम् - one

प्रयोजनम् - purpose

मतम् - is understood

(यत्) - that

नैकजीवेश्वराऽऽत्मनाम् - of
countless jīvas and īśvaras

परमम् - ultimate

कल्याणम् - liberation

भूयात् - may occur

The benevolent Paramātmā’s only purpose in creating the universe is to grant ultimate liberation to countless jīvas and īśvaras. (73)

3.6 Parabrahman's Sacred Form

The author now explicates Paramātman's eternal, human form. He also reconciles this view with references that seem to describe Paramātman as formless by saying that such verses merely refute the position that Paramātman's form is māyic.

साकृतिरेव कर्ताऽयं साकृतिर्व्यापको मतः ।

साकृतिरेव शास्ता स नित्यं साकृतिको हरिः ॥ ७४ ॥

sākṛtireva kartā'yaṃ sākṛtirvyāpako mataḥ,
sākṛtireva śāstā sa nityaṃ sākṛtiko hariḥ.

पदच्छेदः - साकृतिः, एव, कर्ता, अयम्, साकृतिः, व्यापकः, मतः, साकृतिः, एव,
शास्ता, सः, नित्यम्, साकृतिकः, हरिः ॥

अन्वयः

अयं हरिः - this very

Paramātman

साकृतिः - one with a form

(सन्) एव - indeed being

कर्ता (अस्ति) - is the omni-
agent

(अयम्) - this entity

साकृतिः - one who has a
form

(सन् एव) - indeed being

व्यापकः - pervasive

मतः - is known as

साकृतिः - that with a form

(सन्) एव - indeed being

शास्ता (अस्ति) - is the con-
troller

(एवम्) - in this way

सः - this very

नित्यम् - eternally

साकृतिकः (अस्ति) - is one
with a form

Paramātman serves in his capacity as the omniagent while having a definite form. He also pervades while possessing a definite form and controls all, again, while possessing a definite form. In this way, he eternally possesses a definite form. (74)

यश्च करणरूपादेर्निषेधः श्रूयते श्रुतौ ।

मायिकस्यैव स ज्ञेयो दिव्यस्य तत्र रूपणात् ॥ ७५ ॥

yaśca karaṇarūpāderniṣedhaḥ śrūyate śrutau,
māyikasyaiva sa jñeyo divyasya tatra rūpaṇāt.

पदच्छेदः - यः, च, करणरूपादेः, निषेधः, श्रूयते, श्रुतौ, मायिकस्य, एव, सः,
ज्ञेयः, दिव्यस्य, तत्र, रूपणात् ॥

अन्वयः

यः च - and that which

एव - alone

श्रुतौ - in the śrutis

ज्ञेयः - should be under-
stood

(परमात्मनः) - Paramātmān's

करणरूपादेः - of the sense
organs, physical form, etc.

तत्र - there (in these same
śrutis)

निषेधः - negation

दिव्यस्य (करणरूपादेः) रूपणात्
- because of the descrip-
tion of Paramātmān's

श्रूयते - is heard

divine sense organs and
form.

सः (निषेधः) - this negation

मायिकस्य (करणरूपादेः) - of
māyic sense organs, physi-
cal form, etc.

The negation of Paramātmān's sense organs and form heard in the śrutis⁴⁵ should be understood as the negation of māyic sense organs and physical form alone. This is because these same śrutis, indeed, also describe Paramātmān's divine form.⁴⁶ (75)

45 'Śruti' literally means 'that which is heard'. The term refers to the Vedas, part of which includes the Upaniṣads. These texts are referred to as śrutis because Paramātmān first revealed them to enlightened rsis, who heard them and transmitted them to their disciples.

46 See, for instance, Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 1.4.1, Śvetāśvataropaniṣad 3.18, and Muṇḍakopaniṣad 3.1.3 (cited in Bhadrashdas, Svāmīnārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā, 126).

तत्रापि मानवाकारः किशोरो द्विभुजः सदा ।
चतुरष्टभुजत्वादि क्वाचित्कं स्वेच्छया कृतम् ॥ ७६ ॥

tatrā'pi mānavākārah kiśoro dvibhujah sadā,
caturaṣṭabhujatvādi kvācitkaṃ svecchayā kṛtam.

पदच्छेदः - तत्र, अपि, मानवाकारः, किशोरः, द्विभुजः, सदा, चतुरष्टभुजत्वादि,
क्वाचित्कम्, स्वेच्छया, कृतम् ॥

अन्वयः

तत्र - there (in Akṣaradhāman)	द्विभुजः - possessing two arms
अपि - indeed	क्वाचित्कम् - at times
(परमात्मा) - Paramātman	स्वेच्छया - by his own wish
सदा - eternally	चतुरष्टभुजत्वादि - the con- dition of possessing four arms, eight arms, etc.
मानवाकारः - human form	
किशोरः - youthful	कृतम् - is manifested

Indeed, Paramātman always has a human form in Akṣaradhāman; moreover, he is ever youthful and possesses a figure that has two arms. At his will, nonetheless, he sometimes takes upon a form possessing four arms, eight arms, or more.
(76)

The author then explains that only worship offered with an understanding of Paramātman as possessing a divine form leads to liberation, while worship offered with an understanding of Paramātman as being formless is disdainful.

तस्माद्धरेः स्वरूपं तु साकारमेव सर्वदा ।

इति भावनया नित्यं तदुपास्तिर्हि मोक्षदा ॥ ७७ ॥

tasmāddhareḥ svarūpaṁ tu sākārameva sarvadā,
iti bhāvanayā nityaṁ tadupāstirhi mokṣadā.

पदच्छेदः - तस्मात्, हरेः, स्वरूपम्, तु, साकारम्, एव, सर्वदा, इति, भावनया,
नित्यम्, तदुपास्तिः, हि, मोक्षदा ॥

अन्वयः

तस्माद् - therefore

हरेः - Paramātman's

स्वरूपम् - form

तु - indeed

सर्वदा - eternally

साकारम् - with form

एव - certainly

इति भावनया - with such
understanding

नित्यम् - invariably

तदुपास्तिः - worship of
Paramātman

हि - indeed

मोक्षदा - that which grants
liberation

Therefore, worship of Paramātman with the understanding that Paramātman eternally possesses a form invariably grants liberation. (77)

निराकारादिभावाऽऽद्या द्रोहनिग्रहबन्धकृत् ।

साकारत्वे हरेः प्रीतिः शर्कराखण्डवद् बहुः ॥ ७८ ॥

nirākārādibhāvā'ḍhyā drohanigrahabandhakṛt,
sākāratve hareḥ prītiḥ śarkarākhaṇḍavad bahuḥ.

पदच्छेदः - निराकारादिभावाऽऽद्या, द्रोहनिग्रहबन्धकृत्, साकारत्वे, हरेः, प्रीतिः,
शर्कराखण्डवत्, बहुः ॥

अन्वयः

निराकारादिभावाऽऽद्या
(उपासना) - worship of-
fered with the belief that
Paramātman is formless
द्रोहनिग्रहबन्धकृत् - is a dis-
grace that brings upon
Paramātman's displea-
sure and causes one to be
bound [in māyā].

साकारत्वे - in the belief that
he has a form
हरेः - God's
प्रीतिः - pleasure
शर्कराखण्डवद् - like sugar
बहुः - very much
(वर्तते) - is

Worshipping Paramātman as formless is a disgrace that brings upon Paramātman's displeasure and causes one to be bound in māyā. Paramātman's pleasure lies in the belief that he has a form. To him, this belief is as sweet as sugar. (78)

3.7 Pre-Eminence and Perennial Manifestation

The next two verses describe Paramātman's unmatched greatness and declare Swaminarayan himself as Paramātman.

स्वतः सर्वसमुत्कृष्टः सर्वत्र सर्वथा सदा।
गुणैश्वर्यादिभिः क्वाऽपि कोऽपि न तत्समो भवेत् ॥ ७९ ॥

svataḥ sarvasamutkṛṣṭaḥ sarvatra sarvathā sadā,
guṇaiśvaryādibhiḥ kvā'pi ko'pi na tatsamo bhavet.

पदच्छेदः - स्वतः, सर्वसमुत्कृष्टः, सर्वत्र, सर्वथा, सदा, गुणैश्वर्यादिभिः, क्व, अपि, कः, अपि, न, तत्समः, भवेत् ॥

अन्वयः

स्वतः - independently	गुणैश्वर्यादिभिः - by virtues
सर्वत्र - everywhere	and powers
सर्वथा - in every way	तत्समः - one who is equal
सदा - always	to him
सर्वसमुत्कृष्टः - far greater	क्वापि - anywhere
than all	कोऽपि - anyone
(वर्तते) - is	न - not
	भवेत् - is

He is independently far greater than all – everywhere, in every way, and always. In terms of virtues and powers, nowhere is there anyone equal to him. (79)

सोऽयं श्रीसहजानन्दः सर्वोपरि परात्परः ।
स्वामिनारायणः साक्षाद् यस्मान्न विद्यते परः ॥ ८० ॥

so'yaṁ śrīśahajānandaḥ sarvopari parātparaḥ,
svāminārāyaṇaḥ sāksād yasmānna vidyate paraḥ.

पदच्छेदः - सः, अयम्, श्रीसहजानन्दः, सर्वोपरि, परात्परः, स्वामिनारायणः,
साक्षात्, यस्मात्, न, विद्यते, परः ॥

अन्वयः

सः - that

सर्वोपरि - supreme

परात्परः - transcends that
which is superior

अयम् - this very

श्रीसहजानन्दः - Shri Saha-
janand

स्वामिनारायणः - Swamina-
rayan

साक्षात् - himself

यस्मात् (च) - and from
which

परः - above

न - does not

विद्यते - exist

This entity, which is supreme and transcends even that which is superior to all,⁴⁷ is this very Shri Sahajanand, or Swaminarayan himself. No entity is superior to him. (80)

⁴⁷ See footnote 29 under verse 50.

The author now highlights the uniqueness of Bhagwan Swaminarayan's teaching that Paramātman is always present on earth through the Akṣarabrahman guru.

प्रत्यक्षोऽस्तीति सिद्धान्तं स्वामिनारायणो भुवि ।

पूर्वमनुपदिष्टं च विशिष्टमाह शाश्वतम् ॥ ८१ ॥

pratyakṣo'stīti siddhāntaṁ svāminārāyaṇo bhuvi,
pūrvamanupadiṣṭaṁ ca viśiṣṭamāha śāśvatam.

पदच्छेदः - प्रत्यक्षः, अस्ति, इति, सिद्धान्तम्, स्वामिनारायणः, भुवि, पूर्वम्, अनुपदिष्टम्, च, विशिष्टम्, आह, शाश्वतम् ॥

अन्वयः

(परमात्मा) - Paramātman

अनुपदिष्टम् - unstated

भुवि - on earth

विशिष्टम् - distinct

प्रत्यक्षः - manifest

शाश्वतं च - and eternal

अस्ति - is

सिद्धान्तम् - principle

इति - the aforementioned

स्वामिनारायणः - Swaminarayan

पूर्वम् - before

आह - pronounced

Bhagwan Swaminarayan pronounced the previously unstated, distinct, and eternal principle that God is always manifest on earth. (81)

सेवितः सहजानन्दो भक्तैस्तत्कालिकैर्मुदा ।

प्रत्यक्षं संप्रति ज्ञेयं गुरुरूपेण संस्थितम् ॥ ८२ ॥

sevitaḥ saha-jānando bhaktaistat-kālikairmudā,
pratyakṣaṁ saṁprati jñeyaṁ gururūpeṇa saṁsthitam.

पदच्छेदः - सेवितः, सहजानन्दः, भक्तैः, तत्कालिकैः, मुदा, प्रत्यक्षम्, संप्रति,
ज्ञेयम्, गुरुरूपेण, संस्थितम् ॥

अन्वयः

तत्कालिकैः भक्तैः - by the devotees of his time	(सहजानन्दम्) - Sahajanand
सहजानन्दः - Sahajanand (Swaminarayan)	गुरुरूपेण - through the [Akṣarabrahman] guru
मुदा - joyously	प्रत्यक्षम् - manifest
सेवितः - was served	संस्थितम् - residing
सम्प्रति - currently	ज्ञेयम् - should be known

Swaminarayan was joyously served by the devotees of his time. Currently, he should be understood to be manifest through the Akṣarabrahman guru. (82)

The service and worship of the Akṣarabrahman guru are considered to be the service and worship of Paramātmā himself, as the Akṣarabrahman guru embodies Paramātmā. This principle is made clear through the following verse.

सम्यग् वासो यतस्तत्र ह्युद्भूतसर्वशक्तिकः ।
नारायणस्वरूपं तत् प्रत्यक्षमिति सेव्यते ॥ ८३ ॥

samyag vāso yatastatra hyudbhūtasarvaśaktikaḥ,
nārāyaṇasvarūpaṁ tat pratyakṣamiti sevyate.

पदच्छेदः - सम्यक्, वासः, यतः, तत्र, हि, उद्भूतसर्वशक्तिकः, नारायणस्वरूपम्,
तत्, प्रत्यक्षम्, इति, सेव्यते ॥

अन्वयः

यतः - because	हि - indeed
तत्र - there (within the Akṣarabrahman guru)	तत् - that (the Akṣarabrah- man guru)
(परब्रह्मणः) - Parabrahman's	प्रत्यक्षम् - the manifest
उद्भूतसर्वशक्तिकः - with all his sacred energy	नारायणस्वरूपम् - form of Nārāyaṇa
सम्यक् - entirely	इति - thus
वासः - presence	सेव्यते - is served

Parabrahman entirely resides within the Akṣarabrahman guru with all his sacred energy. Therefore, the guru is served as the manifest form of Nārāyaṇa. (83)

3.8 Inherent Divinity

To conclude, Paramātmān's divinity and the fruit of realising this divinity are described.

दिव्यो दिव्याऽतिदिव्योऽयं स्वसङ्गाद् दिव्यताप्रदः ।

दिव्ये धाम्नि सदा दिव्यो दिव्य इह समागतः ॥ ८४ ॥

divyo divyā'tidivyo'yaṃ svasaṅgād divyatāpradaḥ,
divye dhāmnī sadā divyo divya iha samāgataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - दिव्यः, दिव्याऽतिदिव्यः, अयम्, स्वसङ्गात्, दिव्यताप्रदः, दिव्ये, धाम्नि, सदा, दिव्यः, दिव्यः, इह, समागतः ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् - This entity
(Paramātmān)

दिव्यः - divine

दिव्याऽतिदिव्यः - supremely
divine

स्वसङ्गात् - through his
association

(मुमुक्षवे) - for the spiritual
seeker

दिव्यताप्रदः - one who grants
divinity

दिव्ये धाम्नि - in the divine
abode

सदा - forever

दिव्यः - divine

इह समागतः - that which has
come here

(अपि) - also

दिव्यः - divine

Paramātmān is divine; indeed, he is supremely divine. He also grants divinity to those who associate with him. Indeed, he is eternally divine in his divine abode. His manifest form is also divine.⁴⁸ (84)

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⁴⁸See footnote 40 under verse 69.

मानुषे दिव्यतां पश्यन् चिन्तयन् वर्णयन् लिखन् ।
दिव्यानन्दं प्रभुञ्जीत कृपातो दिव्यतानिधेः ॥ ८५ ॥

mānuṣe divyatāṃ paśyan cintayan varṇayan likhan,
divyānandaṃ prabhuñjīta kṛpāto divyatānidheḥ.

पदच्छेदः - मानुषे, दिव्यताम्, पश्यन्, चिन्तयन्, वर्णयन्, लिखन्, दिव्यानन्दम्,
प्रभुञ्जीत, कृपातः, दिव्यतानिधेः ॥

अन्वयः

मानुषे (स्वरूपे) - in	लिखन् (च) - and one who
Parabrahman's human	writes about
form	(भक्तः) - such a devotee
दिव्यताम् - divinity	दिव्यतानिधेः कृपातः - through
पश्यन् - one who sees	the grace of he who is an
चिन्तयन् - one who reflects	ocean of divinity
upon	दिव्यानन्दम् - divine bliss
वर्णयन् - one who speaks of	प्रभुञ्जीत - enjoys

The devotee who sees, reflects upon, speaks of, and writes about the divinity inherent in Paramātman's human form enjoys divine bliss through the grace of this very Paramātman, who is an ocean of divinity. (85)

एवं परब्रह्मस्वामिनारायणप्रबोधित-ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुणातीतगुरुपरम्परोपबृंहित-
 ब्रह्मविद्यालक्षणाऽक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनप्रतिपादके
 साधुभद्रेशदासविरचिते
 स्वामिनारायणसिद्धान्तसुधाऽऽख्ये शास्त्रेऽस्मिन्
 समाप्तं परब्रह्मधारा नाम
 तृतीयं प्रकरणम् ॥

In this way ends the third chapter, known as the 'Parabrahma-dhārā', of Sadhu Bhadreshdas' *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*, a text that substantiates the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, which is characterised as brahmavidyā, was taught by Parabrahman Swaminarayan, and has been fostered by the lineage of brahmasvarūpa, guṇātīta gurus.

Chapter 4

Pramāṇa-dhārā

4.1 Introduction

Many schools of Indian philosophy teach that liberation is secured through experiential knowledge of the self, the world, and the Divine. To this end, the means of attaining knowledge becomes just as important as knowledge itself, as knowledge must be valid in order to liberate. Much of Indian philosophy thus earnestly reflects on various means of knowledge. It often refers to these means as ‘pramāṇas’ and divides them into groups such as pratyakṣa (perception), anumāna (inference), upamāna (analogy), śabda (verbal testimony), arthāpatti (postulation) and anupalabdhi (non-cognition).

The Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana authenticates all means of knowledge, arguing that the knowledge event supersedes the means of attaining knowledge. However, it privileges śabda over the other pramāṇas, arguing that it is the only means through which one can understand that which is divine.

The author begins this chapter by revering the entities of Akṣara and Puruṣottama as the grounds of valid knowledge and the cause of the pramāṇas. He also hails Pramukh Swami Maharaj as the manifest form validation. He then defines knowledge and its relation to the ātman. Thereafter, he elaborates on

two pramāṇas – perception and inference. He describes two types of each pramāṇa and explains how valid knowledge is obtained through these pramāṇas.

The chapter then discusses ‘śabda’, or verbal testimony. It first defines what the term ‘śabda’ encompasses. In particular, it expresses that Parabrahman Swaminarayan’s and the Akṣarabrahman guru’s words are preeminently authoritative, as are the Vedas. With this in mind, it describes as supremely authoritative the following texts: Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s teachings, compiled as the Vacanāmṛta; Akṣarabrahman Gunatitanand Swami’s discourses, compiled as the Svāmīnī Vāto; and the works documenting the lives of Parabrahman Swaminarayan and the Akṣarabrahman gurus. It describes these texts as the sampradāya’s prasthānatrayī or the fellowship’s three foundational texts.

Upon arguing for the significance of śāstras, however, the text places the guru’s words in a higher position than the śāstras. It argues that śāstras alone cannot lead to wisdom, faith, or bliss. Instead, it posits that the śāstras should be learned and imbibed through association with the Akṣarabrahman guru.

4.2 Benediction

The author begins the 'Pramāṇa-dhārā' with three verses that offer homage to Swaminarayan as the cause of 1) the pramāṇas, 2) the valid knowledge that arises from the pramāṇas, and 3) the objects of such valid knowledge. He also bows to his guru, who he describes as the manifest form of validation.

यत्संकल्पाऽनुगं वस्तुभूतिस्थित्यादि सर्वदा ।

यत्संकल्पाऽनुगो वस्तुस्वरूपधर्मनिश्चयः ॥ ८६ ॥

yatsaṅkalpā'nugaṃ vastubhūtisthityādi sarvadā,
yatsaṅkalpā'nugo vastusvarūpadharmaniścayaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - यत्संकल्पाऽनुगम्, वस्तुभूतिस्थित्यादि, सर्वदा, यत्संकल्पऽनुगः
वस्तुस्वरूपधर्मनिश्चयः ॥

अन्वयः

यत्सङ्कल्पानुगम् - according
to whose will

सर्वदा - eternally

वस्तु-भूति-स्थिति-आदि - the
cause, sustenance, and
destruction of objects

(भवति) - occurs

यत्सङ्कल्पानुगः - according
to whose will

वस्तु-स्वरूप-धर्म-निश्चयः - the
form and attributes of all
objects are determined

According to whose will the cause, sustenance, and destruction of objects eternally occurs; according to whose will the form and attributes of objects are determined; (86)

यश्च प्रामाण्यनिर्णेता सर्वप्रामाण्यकारणम् ।

सर्वप्रामाण्यधीहेतुः सर्वप्रमाप्रदः प्रमी ॥ ८७ ॥

yaśca prāmāṇyanirṇetā sarvaprāmāṇyakāraṇam,
sarvaprāmāṇyadhīhetuḥ sarvapramāpradaḥ pramī.

पदच्छेदः - यः, च, प्रामाण्यनिर्णेता, सर्वप्रामाण्यकारणम्, सर्वप्रामाण्यधीहेतुः,
सर्वप्रमाप्रदः, प्रमी ॥

अन्वयः

यः - he who

प्रामाण्यनिर्णेता - the establish-
er of validity

सर्वप्रामाण्यकारणम् - the
source of the means of
knowledge

सर्वप्रामाण्यधीहेतुः - that
which begets knowledge
of validity

सर्वप्रमाप्रदः - that which
begets valid knowledge

प्रमी - the knower

च - and

(भवति) - is

He who is the establisher and source of validity; he who
begets both the knowledge of validity and valid knowledge; and
he who is the knower; (87)

स्वामिनारायणं वन्दे ह्यक्षरपुरुषोत्तमम् ।
 प्रमाणपुरुषं वन्दे प्रमुखं तं गुरुं हरिम् ॥ ८८ ॥

svāminārāyaṇaṁ vande hyakṣarapuruṣottamam,
 pramāṇapuruṣaṁ vande pramukhaṁ taṁ guruṁ harim.

पदच्छेदः - स्वामिनारायणम्, वन्दे, हि, अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमम्, प्रमाणपुरुषम्, वन्दे,
 प्रमुखम्, तम्, गुरुम्, हरिम् ॥

अन्वयः

तम् - that	प्रमाणपुरुषम् - he who is the
स्वामिनारायणम् - Swamina-	form of validation
rayan	गुरुं हरिम् - to guru-hari
हि - indeed	(God in the form of the
अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमम् - Akṣara-Pu-	guru)
ruṣottama	प्रमुखम् - Pramukh (Swami
वन्दे - I bow to	Maharaj)
(तथा) - also	वन्दे - I bow

I bow to this entity, Swaminarayan, also known as Akṣara-Puruṣottama. I also bow to guru-hari Pramukh Swami Maharaj, the manifest form of validation. (88)

4.3 Knowledge

ज्ञानं प्रमात्मकं ज्ञेयं यथाऽवस्थितवस्तुनः ।

यथा शुक्तावियं शुक्ती रजते रजतं तथा ॥ ८९ ॥

jñānaṃ pramātmakaṃ jñeyaṃ yathā'vasthitavastunaḥ,
yathā śukṭāviyaṃ śukṭī rajate rajataṃ tathā.

पदच्छेदः - ज्ञानम्, प्रमात्मकम्, ज्ञेयम्, यथाऽवस्थितवस्तुनः, यथा, शुक्तौ, इयम्, शुक्तिः, रजते, रजतम्, तथा ॥

अन्वयः

यथाऽवस्थितवस्तुनः - an	इयम् - this
object as it stands existentially	शुक्तिः - a shell
	(अस्ति) - is
प्रमात्मकम् - that which is characterised by validity	रजते (च) - and in silver
ज्ञानम् - knowledge	(इदम्) - this
ज्ञेयम् - should be known as	रजतम् - silver
यथा - just as	(अस्ति) - is
शुक्तौ - in a shell	तथा - in this way

Knowledge should be known as the valid understanding of an object as it is. For instance, in the case of a shell, knowledge is the idea of the object being a shell; in the case of silver, it is the idea of the object being silver. (89)

अकात्स्न्यं वैपरीत्यं च तथैव संशयादिकम् ।

अपाकृत्य विबोधे स्यात् प्रमाणमुपकारकम् ॥ ९० ॥

akārtsnyam vaiparītyam ca tathaiva saṁśayādikam,
apākṛtya vibodhane pramāṇamupakāraḥ.

पदच्छेदः - अकात्स्न्यम्, वैपरीत्यम्, च, तथा, एव, संशयादिकम्, अपाकृत्य,
विबोधे, स्यात्, प्रमाणम् उपकारकम् ॥

अन्वयः

अकात्स्न्यम् - incompleteness

विबोधे - in the act of knowing

वैपरीत्यम् च - and delusion

प्रमाणम् - an instrument of knowledge

संशयादिकम् तथा - doubt and other factors

उपकारकम् - beneficial.

एव - indeed

स्यात् - is

अपाकृत्य - having done away with

Indeed, when incompleteness, delusion, doubt, and other mitigating factors are cast aside, instruments of knowledge are useful in the pursuit of wisdom. (90)

आत्मा ज्ञानाऽविनाभावी ज्ञानमात्रविहीनताम् ।

न भजते यतो ह्ययमनादिसंसृतिं गतः ॥ ९१ ॥

ātmā jñānā'vinābhāvī jñānamātravihīnatām,
na bhajate yato hyayamanādisaṃsṛtiṃ gataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - आत्मा, ज्ञानाऽविनाभावी, ज्ञानमात्रविहीनताम्, न, भजते, यतः, हि,
अयम्, अनादिसंसृतिम्, गतः ॥

अन्वयः

ज्ञानाऽविनाभावी - that which
never does not coexist
with knowledge

आत्मा - the ātman

ज्ञानमात्रविहीनताम् - a state
that is devoid of all types
of knowledge

न - does not

भजते - experience

यतः - because

अयम् - this [ātman]

हि - indeed

अनादिसंसृतिम् - beginning-
less saṃsāra

गतः - has attained

The ātman is never without knowledge; that is, it never experiences a state wherein it is devoid of all types of knowledge. This is because it has been eternally engulfed in saṃsāra. (91)

4.4 Perception

Pratyakṣa is one of the means of attaining knowledge. The knowledge attained from pratyakṣa pramāṇa is called pratyakṣa jñāna. This verse describes the two types of pratyakṣa jñāna.

प्रत्यक्षं द्विविधं ज्ञेयं लौकिकं च ह्यलौकिकम् ।

आद्यमिन्द्रियसापेक्षं बद्धजीवेश्वरात्मनाम् ॥ ९२ ॥

pratyakṣam dvividham jñeyam laukikam ca hyalaukikam,
ādyamindriyasāpekṣam baddhajiveśvarātmanām.

पदच्छेदः - प्रत्यक्षम्, द्विविधम्, ज्ञेयम्, लौकिकम्, च, हि, अलौकिकम्, आद्यम्,
इन्द्रियसापेक्षम्, बद्धजीवेश्वरात्मनाम् ॥

अन्वयः

द्विविधम् - of two types

अलौकिकम् - that which is
beyond the senses

प्रत्यक्षम् - knowledge that
arises from perception

च - and

ज्ञेयम् - should be under-
stood

आद्यम् - the first

हि - certainly

बद्धजीवेश्वरात्मनाम् - of bound
jīvas and īśvaras

लौकिकम् - that which is
sensory

इन्द्रियसापेक्षम् - is dependent
upon the senses

Knowledge that arises from perception should be understood to be of two types: that which is ascertained through the senses and that which is beyond the senses. Of these, the prior, which is dependent upon the senses, is that of bound jīvas and īśvaras. (92)

In the Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā, the author here before also describes knowledge that is beyond the senses. Afterwards, he proceeds to further elaborate on knowledge that is dependent on the senses.

सापेक्षं द्विविधं ज्ञेयं बाह्यमाभ्यन्तरं तथा ।

समनश्चक्षुरादीनां बाह्यं विषयसंगतः ॥ ९३ ॥

sāpekṣaṃ dvividhaṃ jñeyaṃ bāhyamābhyantaram tathā,
samanaścakṣurādīnāṃ bāhyaṃ viṣayaśaṅgataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - सापेक्षम्, द्विविधम्, ज्ञेयम्, बाह्यम्, आभ्यन्तरम्, तथा, समनश्चक्षुरादीनाम्, बाह्यम्, विषयसंगतः ॥

अन्वयः

द्विविधम् - of two types

सापेक्षम् - dependence (on the senses)

ज्ञेयम् - should be understood

बाह्यम् - external

आभ्यन्तरं तथा - and internal

विषयसंगतः - due to contact with the objects of the senses

बाह्यम् - external [dependence]

समनश्चक्षुरादीनाम् - that which relies on the eyes and other gross senses, which must necessarily be accompanied by the mind

(सापेक्षम्) - reliance

Dependence on the senses should be known to be of two types: external and internal. Of these, the first occurs when the eyes and other physical senses, accompanied by the mind, connect with external objects. (93)

बाह्येन्द्रियऽनपेक्षं यदन्तः समृत्यादि मानसम् ।

षड्विधकरणाऽपेक्षं तदपि षड्विधं भवेत् ॥ ९४ ॥

bāhyendriya'napekṣaṃ yadantaḥ samṛtyādi mānasam,
ṣaḍvidhakaraṇā'pekṣaṃ tadapi ṣaḍvidham bhavet.

पदच्छेदः - बाह्येन्द्रियऽनपेक्षम्, यद्, अन्तः, स्मृत्यादि, मानसम्, षड्विधकरणाऽ-
पेक्षम्, तद्, अपि, षड्विधम्, भवेत् ॥

अन्वयः

बाह्येन्द्रियऽनपेक्षम् - that	(प्रत्यक्षम्) - perception
which is not dependent	षड्विधकरणाऽपेक्षम् - is
on external senses	dependent upon the six
स्मृत्यादि - recollection and	senses
other	तद् - that
मानसम् - cognitive	अपि - also
यद् - that which	षड्विधम् - of six types
अन्तः - internal	भवेत् - is

Perception that does not rely on external senses, such as recollection etc., is internal perception. The six senses (including the mind) give rise to perception; therefore, perception is also of six types. (94)

आत्माऽन्तःकरणाऽऽद्यं स्यात् प्रमाणं चक्षुरादिकम् ।

विषयग्राहकाणि स्युरिन्द्रियाणि स्ववृत्तिभिः ॥ ९५ ॥

ātma'ntahkaraṇā'dhyam syāt pramāṇam cakṣurādikam,
viṣayagrāhakāṇi syurindriyāṇi svavṛttibhiḥ.

पदच्छेदः - आत्माऽन्तःकरणाऽऽद्यम्, स्यात्, प्रमाणम्, चक्षुरादिकम् ।
विषयग्राहकाणि, स्युः, इन्द्रियाणि, स्ववृत्तिभिः ॥

अन्वयः -

चक्षुरादिकम् - the eyes and
other gross senses

आत्माऽन्तःकरणाऽऽद्यम् - that
which is enhanced by
the ātman and the inner
faculties, such as the mind
and intellect

(एव) - only

प्रमाणम् - instrument of
knowledge

स्यात् - is

(तानि) इन्द्रियाणि - these gross
senses

(च) - moreover

स्ववृत्तिभिः - through their
vṛttis (idiosyncratic emanations)

विषयग्राहकाणि - grasp their
objects

स्युः - are

The eyes and other gross senses are instruments of knowledge only when empowered by the ātman and the inner faculties. These gross senses grasp their objects through their vṛttis (idiosyncratic emanations). (95)

4.5 Inference

अनु हेतुमितिं नित्यं साध्यस्य जायते मितिः ।

तस्मादनुमितिः प्रोक्ता प्रमाणस्थाऽनुमानजा ॥ ९६ ॥

anu hetumitiṃ nityaṃ sādhyasya jāyate mitiḥ,
tasmādanumitiḥ proktā pramāṇasthā'numānjā.

पदच्छेदः - अनु, हेतुमितिम्, नित्यम्, साध्यस्य, जायते, मितिः, तस्मात्, अनुमितिः,
प्रोक्ता, प्रमाणस्थाऽनुमानजा ॥

अन्वयः

नित्यम् - always

हेतुमितिम् - knowledge of the
reason for inference

अनु - after

साध्यस्य - of that which is
inferred

मितिः - knowledge

जायते - is created

तस्मात् - therefore

प्रमाणस्था - that which

stands amidst the means
of obtaining valid knowl-
edge

अनुमानजा - that which is
born from inference

अनुमितिः - inferred knowl-
edge

प्रोक्ता - is described as

It is always the case that knowledge of that which is inferred arises only after knowledge of the reason for inference arises. Therefore, inferred knowledge is described as being born from inference. (96)

अनुमानं द्विधं प्रोक्तं स्वार्थपरार्थभेदयोः ।
स्वार्थं स्वाऽनुमितेर्हेतुः पराऽनुमितिकृत्परम् ॥ ९७ ॥

anumānaṁ dvidhaṁ proktaṁ svārthaparārthabhedayoḥ,
svārthaṁ svā'numiterhetuḥ parā'numitikṛtparam.

पदच्छेदः - अनुमानम्, द्विधम्, प्रोक्तम्, स्वार्थपरार्थभेदयोः, स्वार्थम्, स्वाऽनुमितेः,
हेतुः, पराऽनुमितिकृत्, परम् ॥

अन्वयः

स्वार्थपरार्थभेदयोः - due to the
distinction between the
svārtha and parārtha

द्विधम् - of two types

अनुमानम् - inference

प्रोक्तम् - is described

स्वार्थम् - the svārtha

स्वाऽनुमितेः - of one's own
inferential knowledge

हेतुः - the cause

परम् - the latter

पराऽनुमितिकृत् - that which
engenders knowledge for
others.

Inference is described as being of two types: svārtha and parārtha. The svārtha engenders knowledge for oneself; the latter engenders knowledge for others. (97)

हेतुवद्भि यदाभासो हेतवो दूषिता मताः ।

हेत्वाभासास्ततो ज्ञेया व्याप्त्यनुमितिरोधकाः ॥ ९८ ॥

hetuvaddhi yadābhāso hetavo dūṣitā mataḥ,
hetvābhāsāstato jñeyā vyāptyanumitirodhakāḥ.

पदच्छेदः - हेतुवद्, हि, यद्, आभासः, हेतवः, दूषिताः, मताः, हेत्वाभासाः, ततः,
ज्ञेयाः, व्याप्त्यनुमितिरोधकाः ॥

अन्वयः

हेतुवद् हि यदाभासः - that
which is misconceived as
a cause

(ते) - those

दूषिताः - erroneous

हेतवः - causes

मताः - are known as

ततः - therefore

हेत्वाभासाः - that which is
a semblance of a cause of
inference

ज्ञेयाः - should be known as

(ये) - that which

व्याप्त्यनुमितिरोधकाः - that
which hinders knowledge
of invariable concom-
itance and knowledge
arising from inference

Those which are misconceived as a cause are erroneous causes. These erroneous causes hinder knowledge of invariable concomitance and knowledge arising from inference. Therefore, they should be known as 'hetvābhāsaḥ' (98)

हेतुरुपमितेर्यः स्यादुपमानं तदुच्यते ।
शास्त्रोपयोगबाहुल्यात् प्रामाण्यं न जहाति तत् ॥ ९९ ॥

heturupamiteryaḥ syādupamānaṁ taducyate,
śāstropayogabāhulyāt prāmāṇyaṁ na jahāti tat.

पदच्छेदः - हेतुः, उपमितेः, यः, स्यात्, उपमानम्, तद्, उच्यते, शास्त्रोपयोगबाहुल्यात्,
प्रामाण्यम्, न, जहाति, तत् ॥

अन्वयः

उपमितेः - of knowledge arising from resemblance	(उपमानस्य) - comparison's
यः - that which	शास्त्रोपयोगबाहुल्यात् - due to its prevalent use in the
हेतुः - cause	śāstras
स्यात् - is	(तत्) - it
तद् - that	प्रामाण्यम् - validity
उपमानम् - comparison	न - does not
उच्यते - is said to be	जहाति - renounce

Comparison is said to be the cause of the knowledge that arises from resemblance. It is a valid means to knowledge due to its prevalent use in the śāstras. (99)

4.6 Verbal Testimony

शब्दो यो हि यथार्थः स्यात् प्रामाण्यं भजते सदा ।

अन्यथा नैव प्रामाण्यं दुष्टशब्दादनर्थधीः ॥ १०० ॥

śabdo yo hi yathārthaḥ syāt prāmāṇyaṁ bhajate sadā,
anyathā naiva prāmāṇyaṁ duṣṭaśabdādanarthadhīḥ.

पदच्छेदः - शब्दः, यः, हि, यथार्थः, स्यात्, प्रामाण्यम्, भजते, सदा, अन्यथा, न,
एव, प्रामाण्यम्, दुष्टशब्दात्, अनर्थधीः ॥

अन्वयः

यः - that which	दुष्टशब्दात् - from unprecise
यथार्थः - precise	verbal testimony
शब्दः - verbal testimony	अनर्थधीः - inaccurate
स्यात् - is	knowledge
प्रामाण्यम् - authenticity as a	(भवति) - arises
means to valid knowledge	(तस्य दुष्टशब्दस्य) - of this
हि - indeed	unprecise verbal testimo-
भजते - enjoys	ny
सदा - always	न - not
अन्यथा - otherwise	एव - certainly
	प्रामाण्यम् - authenticity as a
	means to valid knowledge

Precise verbal testimony indeed enjoys authenticity as a means to valid knowledge at all times. On the other hand, unprecise verbal testimony which gives rise to inaccurate knowledge, certainly does not carry authenticity as a means to valid knowledge. (100)

हरेर्गुरोश्च यः शब्दः प्रमाणं निखिलो मतः ।
तदुपदिष्टं सच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं तत्कृताऽर्थकम् ॥ १०१ ॥

harergurośca yaḥ śabdaḥ pramāṇaṁ nikhilo mataḥ,
tadupadiṣṭaṁ sacchāstraṁ pramāṇaṁ tatkr̥tā'rthakam.

पदच्छेदः - हरेः, गुरोः, च, यः, शब्दः, प्रमाणम्, निखिलः, मतः, तदुपदिष्टम्,
सच्छास्त्रम्, प्रमाणम्, तत्कृताऽर्थकम् ॥

अन्वयः

हरेः - of Parabrahman	मतः - is understood
गुरोः - of the Akṣarabrahman guru	तदुपदिष्टम् - taught by them
च - and	तत्कृताऽर्थकम् - according to meaning offered by them
यः - that which	सच्छास्त्रम् - 'śāstra
निखिलः - the entirety of	प्रमाणम् - authoritative
शब्दः - word	(अस्ति) - is
प्रमाणम् - authoritative	

Parabrahman's and the Akṣarabrahman guru's words, in their entirety, are understood to be authoritative. Śāstra that incorporates Parabrahman's and Akṣarabrahman's teachings and is in accordance with their explanations is also authoritative. (101)

संहिताब्राह्मणात्मा यस्तथोपनिषदात्मकः ।

आरण्यकस्वरूपश्च वेदः प्रामाण्यभाग् भवेत् ॥ १०२ ॥

saṃhitābrāhmaṇātma yastathopaniṣadātmakaḥ,
āraṇyakasvarūpaśca vedāḥ prāmāṇyabhāg bhavet.

पदच्छेदः - संहिताब्राह्मणात्मा, यः, तथा, उपनिषदात्मकः, आरण्यकस्वरूपः, च,
वेदः, प्रामाण्यभाग्, भवेत् ॥

अन्वयः

यः - that which

संहिताब्राह्मणात्मा - in the
form of the Saṃhitās and
the Brāhmaṇas

उपनिषदात्मकः - in the form
of the Upaniṣads

तथा - and

आरण्यकस्वरूपः - in the
form of the Āraṇyakas

च - and

वेदः - the Veda

प्रामाण्यभाग् - the enjoyer of
authoritativeness

भवेत् - is

The Veda, which appears in the form of the Saṃhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, and Āraṇyakas, is understood to be authoritative. (102)

शिक्षादीनां तदङ्गानां वेदरक्षा प्रयोजनम् ।

वेदपीडा भवेन्नूनं वैपरीत्यात् पदार्थयोः ॥ १०३ ॥

śikṣādīnāṃ tadāṅgānāṃ vedarakṣā prayojanam,
vedapīḍā bhavennūnaṃ vaiparītyāt padārthayoḥ.

पदच्छेदः - शिक्षादीनाम्, तदङ्गानाम्, वेदरक्षा, प्रयोजनम्, वेदपीडा भवेत्, नूनम्,
वैपरीत्यात्, पदार्थयोः ॥

अन्वयः

तदङ्गानाम् - its (the Veda's)
auxiliary texts

शिक्षादीनाम् - the Śikṣā and
others

प्रयोजनम् - purpose

वेदरक्षा - safeguarding the
Veda

नूनम् - indeed

पदार्थयोः - words and their
meanings

वैपरीत्यात् - due to inconsis-
tency

वेदपीडा - harm to the Veda

भवेत् - occurs

The Śikṣā and other auxiliary texts safeguard the Veda. In-
deed, inconsistency between words and their meanings brings
harm to the Veda [by giving rise to false interpretation]. (103)

इतिहासपुराणाभ्यां तस्मात् तदुपबृंहणम् ।
सदाचारेण शिष्टानां वेदार्थोज्जीवनं भुवि ॥ १०४ ॥

itihāsapurāṇābhyāṃ tasmāt tadupabṛṃhaṇam,
sadācāreṇa śiṣṭānāṃ vedārthojjīvanam bhuvi.

पदच्छेदः - इतिहासपुराणाभ्याम्, तस्मात्, तदुपबृंहणम्, सदाचारेण, शिष्टानाम्,
वेदार्थोज्जीवनम्, भुवि ॥

अन्वयः

तस्मात् - therefore	(च) - moreover
इतिहासपुराणाभ्याम् - through the itihāsas and purāṇas	सदाचारेण - through virtu- ous conduct
तदुपबृंहणम् - its elucidation	भुवि - in the world
शिष्टानाम् - of those who are wise	वेदार्थोज्जीवनम् - the Veda's values thrive

Therefore, the Veda is elucidated through the itihāsas and purāṇas. Moreover, the Veda's values continue to thrive in the world through the virtuous conduct of those who are wise. (104)

साक्षाद्वेदो भवेद् वाक्यं स्वामिनारायणप्रभोः ।

गुरुश्च पञ्चमो वेदस्तच्छब्दश्रेष्ठता ततः ॥ १०५ ॥

iti hāsapurāṇābhyām tasmāt tadupabṛmhaṇam,
sadācāreṇa śiṣṭānām vedārthojjīvanam bhuvi.

पदच्छेदः - साक्षात्, वेदः, भवेत्, वाक्यम्, स्वामिनारायणप्रभोः, गुरुः, च, पञ्चमः,
वेदः, तच्छब्दश्रेष्ठता, ततः ॥

अन्वयः

स्वामिनारायणप्रभोः - Bhagwan
Swaminarayan's

वाक्यम् - word

साक्षाद् - itself

वेदः - the Veda

भवेत् - is

गुरुः च - and the
Akṣarabrahman guru

पञ्चमो वेदः - the fifth Veda

ततः - therefore

तच्छब्दश्रेष्ठता - their words
carry preeminence

Bhagwan Swaminarayan's word is equivalent to the Veda itself. The Akṣarabrahman guru, moreover, is the fifth Veda. Therefore, Swaminarayan's and the Akṣarabrahman guru's words are preminent.⁴⁹ (105)

⁴⁹The Vedic corpus consists of four parts – the Ṛg, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva Vedas. In this verse, though, the author equates Swaminarayan's and the Akṣarabrahman guru's words with the Vedas in order to explain their supreme authority. Indeed, just as the Vedas are considered direct revelation, Parabrahman Swaminarayan's words and the Akṣarabrahman guru's words also entail direct revelation and are, thus, just as authoritative as the Vedas.

The author now enumerates the texts in which Swaminarayan's and the Akṣarabrahman guru's words appear.

वचनामृतशास्त्रं हि वार्ताश्च स्वामिनः शुभाः ।

गुरुचरित्रग्रन्थाश्च प्रस्थानत्रयमुच्यते ॥ १०६ ॥

vacanāmṛtaśāstraṃ hi vārtāśca svāmināḥ śubhāḥ,
gurucaritragranthāśca prasthānatrayamucyate.

पदच्छेदः - वचनामृतशास्त्रम्, हि, वार्ताः, च, स्वामिनः, शुभाः, गुरुचरित्रग्रन्थाः च,
प्रस्थानत्रयम्, उच्यते ॥

अन्वयः

वचनामृतशास्त्रम् - The Va-
canāmṛta

स्वामिनः - [Gunatitanand]
Swami's

शुभाः - auspicious

वार्ताः - talks

च - and

हि - certainly

गुरुचरित्रग्रन्थाः - the texts
documenting the lives of
the gurus

च - and

(साम्प्रदायिकम्) - of the
sampradāya

प्रस्थानत्रयम् - the prasthāna-
trayī (the three founda-
tional texts)

उच्यते - known as

The Vacanāmṛta, Gunatitanand Swami's auspicious talks (the Svāmīnī Vāto), and the texts documenting the lives of the Akṣarabrahman gurus are known as the prasthānatrayī (the three foundational texts) of the sampradāya (the

सिद्धान्ताऽनुगमन्यत्तु सर्वथा साम्प्रदायिकम् ।
गुरुप्रमाणितं ह्येव प्रामाण्यपदवीं भजेत् ॥ १०७ ॥

siddhāntā'nugamanyattu sarvathā sāmpradāyikam,
gurupramāṇitaṁ hyeva prāmāṇyapadaviṁ bhajet.

पदच्छेदः - सिद्धान्ताऽनुगम्, अन्यत्, तु, सर्वथा, साम्प्रदायिकम्, गुरुप्रमाणितम्, हि,
एव, प्रामाण्यपदवीम्, भजेत् ॥

अन्वयः

अन्यत् साम्प्रदायिकम् (शास्त्रम्)
- other śāstras of the
sampradāya

तु - on the other hand
सर्वथा - in every way

सिद्धान्ताऽनुगम् - according to
the sampradāya's princi-
ples

गुरुप्रमाणितम् (च) - and cor-
roborated by the guru
हि - indeed

(तत्) एव (शास्त्रम्) - that
śāstra alone

प्रामाण्यपदवीम् - authority
भजेत् - enjoys

Other sāmpradāyika texts that endorse the sampradāya's principles in every way and are corroborated by the guru alone, indeed, are authoritative. (107)

प्रत्यक्षादिप्रमाणेषु शब्दस्तु प्रमुखो भवेत् ।
यस्मादलौकिकाऽर्थेषु शब्दाऽन्यप्रसरो न हि ॥ १०८ ॥

pratyakṣādipramāṇeṣu śabdastu pramukho bhavet,
yasmādalaukikā'rtheṣu śabdā'nyaprasaro na hi.

पदच्छेदः - प्रत्यक्षादिप्रमाणेषु, शब्दः, तु, प्रमुखः, भवेत्, यस्मात्, अलौकिकाऽर्थेषु,
शब्दाऽन्यप्रसरः, न, हि ॥

अन्वयः

प्रत्यक्षादिप्रमाणेषु - amongst perception and the other methods of obtaining knowledge	यस्मात् - because अलौकिकाऽर्थेषु - in oth- er-worldly objects
तु - certainly	न (भवति) - does not occur
शब्दः - verbal testimony	हि - indeed
प्रमुखः - chief	शब्दाऽन्यप्रसरः - the reach of methods other than verbal testimony
भवेत् - is	

Amongst perception and the other methods of obtaining valid knowledge, verbal testimony is certainly the most authoritative. This is because, undoubtedly, methods of knowledge other than verbal testimony cannot reach those objects that are not of this world. (108)

केवलमनुमानं तु परात्मसाधकं न हि ।

व्यभिचारादिदोषत्वं कार्यत्वादेर्न वार्यते ॥ १०९ ॥

kevalamanumānaṃ tu parātmasādhakaṃ na hi,
vyabhicārādidoṣatvaṃ kāryatvāderna vāryate.

पदच्छेदः - केवलम्, अनुमानम्, तु, परात्मसाधकम्, न, हि, व्यभिचारादिदोषत्वम्,
कार्यत्वादेः, न, वार्यते ॥

अन्वयः

केवलम् - alone	(कर्तृत्वस्य अनुमाने) - the
अनुमानम् - inference	inference that there is
तु - certainly	a cause [in the form of
न - not	Paramātman]
हि - indeed	व्यभिचारादिदोषत्वम् - falla-
परमसाधकम् - that which	ciousness and other types
proves [the existence of]	of [logical] error
Paramātman	न - not
कार्यत्वादेः (हेतोः) - based on	वार्यते - resolved
the reason of there being	
an effect [in the form of	
creation]	

Inference alone certainly cannot prove Paramātman's existence. Verily, fallaciousness and other types of logical error are not resolved when it is reasoned that the existence of an effect (creation) necessitates the existence of any cause (Paramātman).
(109)

अतः शास्त्राऽऽश्रयो श्रेयान् अनुमानादलौकिके ।

जगत्कर्तृत्वबोधाय ह्यक्षरे पुरुषोत्तमे ॥ ११० ॥

ataḥ śāstrā"śrayo śreyān anumānādalaukike,
jagatkartṛtvabodhāya hyakṣare puruṣottame.

पदच्छेदः - अतः, शास्त्राऽऽश्रयः, श्रेयान्, अनुमानादलौकिके, जगत्कर्तृत्वबोधाय,
हि, अक्षरे, पुरुषोत्तमे ॥

अन्वयः

अतः - therefore

अलौकिके - in that which is
not of this world

अक्षरे - in Akṣara

पुरुषोत्तमे (च) - and in Pu-
ruṣottama

जगत्कर्तृत्वबोधाय - for knowl-
edge of the causality of
creation

अनुमानादिलौकिके (प्रमाणे) - in
comparison to inference
and other, ordinary means
of obtaining knowledge

हि - certainly

श्रेयान् - superior

शास्त्राऽऽश्रयः - reliance on
śāstra.

Therefore, for knowledge of Akṣara and Puruṣottama's cos-
mogonic causality, reliance on śāstra is superior to dependence
on inference and other, ordinary means of knowledge acquisi-
tion. (110)

शास्त्रशब्दोऽपि नो सेव्यो गुरोराश्रयणं विना ।
गुरुमुखाच्छ्रुतं शास्त्रं सदर्थस्तु प्रकाशयेत् ॥ १११ ॥

ataḥ śāstrā"śrayo śreyān anumānādalaukike,
jagatkartṛtvabodhāya hyakṣare puruṣottame.

पदच्छेदः - शास्त्रशब्दः, अपि, नो, सेव्यः, गुरोः, आश्रयणम्, विना, गुरुमुखात्,
श्रुतम्, शास्त्रम्, सदर्थान्, तु, प्रकाशयेत् ॥

अन्वयः

गुरोः - the guru's	शास्त्रम् - śāstra
आश्रयणम् - refuge	गुरुमुखात् - from the guru's mouth
विना - without	
शास्त्रशब्दः - the śāstra's words	श्रुतम् - is heard (तदा एव) - only then
अपि - however	सदर्थान् - truth
नो सेव्यः - should not be resorted to	तु - indeed प्रकाशयेत् - is illumined
(यदा) - when	

However, even the words of the śāstras must not be resorted to without having taken the brahmasvarūpa guru's refuge. Truth, indeed, is only illumined when śāstra is heard from the guru. (III)

गुरुहरिबलं श्रेष्ठं शास्त्रवचोबलादपि ।
शास्त्रात्तु केवलात् क्वापि न ज्ञानं निश्चयः सुखम् ॥ ११२ ॥

guruharibalaṃ śreṣṭhaṃ śāstravacobalādapi,
śāstrāttu kevalāt kvāpi na jñānaṃ niścayaḥ sukham.

पदच्छेदः - गुरुहरिबलम्, श्रेष्ठम्, शास्त्रवचोबलात्, अपि, शास्त्रात्, तु, केवलात्,
क्व, अपि, न, ज्ञानम्, निश्चयः, सुखम् ॥

अन्वयः

शास्त्रवचोबलाद् अपि - even	तु - certainly
than the strength of the	क्वापि - absolutely any-
śāstras' words	where
गुरुहरिबलम् - the guru-hari's	ज्ञानम् - wisdom
strength	निश्चयः - faith
श्रेष्ठम् - is greater	सुखम् (वा) - or bliss
केवलात् शास्त्रात् - only from	न (भवति) - does not occur
the śāstras	

The guru-hari's strength is greater than the strength of the śāstras' words, as the śāstras' words alone can certainly never lead to wisdom, faith, or bliss. (112)

4.7 The Preeminence of the Knowledge Event

प्रत्यनीकं भवेद् यद्धि प्रमायां करणं न हि ।

प्रमित्यनुगुणत्वे तु न तत्संख्यादुराग्रहः ॥ ११३ ॥

pratyanikaṃ bhaved yaddhi pramāyāṃ karaṇaṃ na hi,
pramityanugūṇatve tu na tatsaṅkhyādurāgrahaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - प्रत्यनीकम्, भवेत्, यद्, हि, प्रमायाम्, करणम्, न, हि, प्रमित्यनुगुणत्वे,
तु, न, तत्संख्यादुराग्रहः ॥

अन्वयः

प्रमायाम् - in valid knowl-
edge

यद् - that which

प्रत्यनीकम् - is an obstruc-
tion

भवेत् - is

(तत्) - that

न - not

हि - certainly

करणम् - the causal factor

प्रमित्यनुगुणत्वे (प्रमाणे) - in
the case that a means of
acquiring knowledge is
congruent with (leads to)
valid knowledge,

तु - in contrast

न - not

तत्संख्यादुराग्रहः - insistence
on its enumeration

That which obstructs knowledge that accords with truth certainly does not lead to valid knowledge. On the other hand, in the case that a means of acquiring knowledge leads to valid knowledge, here, there is no insistence on the enumeration of means.⁵⁰ (113)

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50 Philosophical schools often go great lengths to enumerate the various methods of acquiring valid knowledge. Here, however, the author shifts the conversation to focus on the acquisition of valid knowledge, rather than on enumeration of methods.

अतोऽर्थापत्तिरित्यादेश्चेत् सिद्धान्ताऽविरोधिता ।

तदा बोधोपयुक्तत्वात् पृथगुक्ता प्रमाणता ॥ ११४ ॥

ato'rthāpattirityādeścet siddhāntā'virodhitā,
tadā bodhopayuktatvāt pṛthaguktā pramāṇatā.

पदच्छेदः - अतः, अर्थापत्तिरित्यादेः, चेत्, सिद्धान्ताऽविरोधिता, तदा,
बोधोपयुक्तत्वात्, पृथक्, उक्ता, प्रमाणता ॥

अन्वयः

अतः - therefore

तदा - then

अर्थापत्तिरित्यादेः (प्रमाणजातस्य)
- of postulation and the
aggregate of other such
means of knowledge

बोधोपयुक्तत्वात् - due to
being useful in acquiring
knowledge

पृथक् - independent

सिद्धान्ताऽविरोधिता - non-op-
position to truth

प्रमाणता - the quality of
being a valid means of
knowledge

(भवेत्) - is

चेत् - if

उक्ता - is said

Therefore, if postulation and other such means of acquiring knowledge are not in opposition to truth, they are said to be independent means of valid knowledge, as they are useful in understanding truth. (114)

4.8 Erroneous Knowledge

भ्रान्तौ ख्यातिस्तु विज्ञेया चिदचित्ख्यातिसंज्ञका ।
प्रवृत्तिर्द्विविधा भ्रान्तेस्तस्मादेकान्तिको न हि ॥ ११५ ॥

bhrāntau khyātistu vijñeyā cidacitkhyātiśaṅṅkā,
pravṛttirdvividhā bhrāntestasmādekāntiko na hi.

पदच्छेदः - भ्रान्तौ, ख्यातिः, तु, विज्ञेया, चिदचित्ख्यातिसंज्ञका, प्रवृत्तिः, द्विविधा,
भ्रान्तेः, तस्मात्, एकान्तिकः, न, हि ॥

अन्वयः

भ्रान्तौ - in the subject of delusion	भ्रान्तेः - of delusion
तु - indeed	द्विविधा - two types
चिदचित्ख्यातिसंज्ञका - to be of the designation of 'cidacit'	प्रवृत्तिः - source (object)
ख्यातिः - knowledge	तस्मात् - therefore
विज्ञेया - should be known as	न - not
	हि - certainly
	एकान्तिकः - that which appears as one

In the subject of delusion, knowledge should be known as 'cidacitkhyāti'. Delusion has two types of sources; therefore, it certainly does not appear as one. (115)

पञ्चीकारो भवेद् यत्र सत्कार्यतोपपद्यते ।
अचित्ख्यातिर्मता तत्र शुक्त्यादौ रजतादिके ॥ ११६ ॥

pañcīkāro bhaved yatra satkāryatopapadyate,
acitkhyātirmatā tatra śuktyādau rajatādike.

पदच्छेदः - पञ्चीकारः, भवेत्, यत्र, सत्कार्यता, उपपद्यते । अचित्ख्यातिः, मता,
तत्र, शुक्त्यादौ, रजतादिके ॥

अन्वयः

यत्र - where	अचित्ख्यातिः - acitkhyāti
पञ्चीकारः - quintuplication	मता - is understood
भवेत् - occurs	(यथा) - such as
(अर्थात्) - in other words	शुक्त्यादौ - when in shells and other such objects
सत्कार्यता - the creation of material objects	रजतादिके - silver and other such items
उपपद्यते - occurs	(ज्ञाते) - are cognised
तत्र - there	

Among objects that are created as a result of quintuplication and satkāryatā, delusion is understood to take the form of acitkhyāti. An example of such delusion occurs when silver and other such items are cognised in shells and other such objects. (116)

ततो भिन्ने तु चित्ख्यातिर्वैपरीत्यं यदा भवेत् ।
यथाऽऽत्मसु जडत्वादि चेतनत्वं जडेषु च ॥ ११७ ॥

tato bhinne tu citkhyātirvaiparītyaṃ yadā bhavet,
yathā”tmasu jaḍatvādi cetanatvaṃ jaḍeṣu ca.

पदच्छेदः - ततः, भिन्ने, तु, चित्ख्यातिः, वैपरीत्यम्, यदा, भवेत्, यथाऽऽत्मसु,
जडत्वादि, चेतनत्वम्, जडेषु च ॥

अन्वयः

ततः - from this	यथा - such as
भिन्ने (विषये) - in a different subject	आत्मसु - in relation to the ātmans
वैपरीत्यम् - delusion	जडत्वादि - non-sentience and other qualities
यदा - when	जडेषु - in relation to non-sentient objects
(भवेत्) - occurs	च - and
(तदा) - then	चेतनत्वम् - sentience
चित्ख्यातिः - citkhyāti	(मतम्) - one understands
भवेत् - occurs	

Delusion concerning a subject other than that previously presented should be known as citkhyāti. An example of such delusion occurs when one understands non-sentience and other qualities to exist in the ātmans or when one understands sentience to exist in non-sentient objects. (117)

एवं परब्रह्मस्वामिनारायणप्रबोधित-ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुणातीतगुरुपरम्परोपबृंहित-
 ब्रह्मविद्यालक्षणाऽक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनप्रतिपादके
 साधुभट्टेशदासविरचिते
 स्वामिनारायणसिद्धान्तसुधाऽऽख्ये शास्त्रेऽस्मिन्
 समाप्तं प्रमाणधारा नाम
 चतुर्थं प्रकरणम् ॥

In this way ends the fourth chapter, known as the 'Pramana dhārā', of Sadhu Bhadreshdas' *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*, a text that substantiates the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, which is characterised as brahmavidyā, was taught by Parabrahman Swaminarayan, and has been fostered by the lineage of brahm-asvarūpa, guṇātīta gurus.

Chapter 5

Māyā-dhārā

5.1 Introduction

The preceding three chapters discussed Akṣara and Puruṣottama, as well as the means to attaining knowledge of these two divine entities. The author now discusses māyā, the substance that prevents people from attaining this knowledge.

Māyā is the only one of the five ontological entities that is non-sentient. It is eternal but is constantly changing as its three qualities (sattva, rajas, and tamas) continually subdue each other. All things created in the universe are comprised of these three qualities of māyā in varying degrees. Māyā is thus known as one of the universe's material causes. Furthermore, it is known as the cause of ego, possessiveness, delusion, carelessness, and attachment. It also hinders spiritual knowledge and causes one to see Paramātmā and the Akṣarabrahman guru as ordinary, rather than divine. In this way, it blocks liberation and causes perpetual return to the cycle of births and deaths.

The Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, however, teaches that māyā can be overcome through association with the Akṣarabrahman guru. This chapter thus concludes by exalting such association and saying that, once the journey has been made through such association, it can offer unhindered bhakti to Parabrahman.

5.2 Benediction

The 'Māyā-dhārā' begins with an invocation to Akṣara and Puruṣottama. It exalts them as the two entities that govern māyā, the focus of this chapter.

त्रिगुणसाम्यवैषम्ये यदाधिपत्यसम्भवे ।

वन्दे मायाऽधिपौ साक्षादक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ ॥ ११८ ॥

triguṇasāmyavaiṣamye yadādhīpatyasambhave,
vande māyā'dhipau sākṣādakṣarapuruṣottamau.

पदच्छेदः - त्रिगुणसाम्यवैषम्ये, यदाधिपत्यसम्भवे, वन्दे, मायाऽधिपौ, साक्षात्, अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ ॥

अन्वयः

त्रिगुणसाम्यवैषम्ये - in the
balance and imbalance of
māyā's three qualities

यदाधिपत्यसम्भवे - to those
under whose rulership it
comes to be

मायाऽधिपौ - to the control-
lers of māyā

साक्षात् - themselves

अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ - to Akṣara
and Puruṣottama

वन्दे - I bow

I bow to the manifest forms of Akṣara and Puruṣottama, the rulers of māyā, under whose sovereignty māyā's three qualities attain balance and imbalance. (118)

5.3 Māyā's Nature & Form

माया त्रिगुणयुक्ता स्याद् ब्रह्मपरात्मशासिता ।
परिणामवती नित्या विस्मयकारिणी जडा ॥ ११९ ॥

māyā triguṇayuktā syād brahmaparātmaśāsītā,
pariṇāmavatī nityā vismayakāriṇī jaḍā.

पदच्छेदः - माया, त्रिगुणयुक्ता, स्यात्, ब्रह्मपरात्मशासिता, परिणामवती, नित्या,
विस्मयकारिणी, जडा ॥

अन्वयः

त्रिगुणयुक्ता - that which is of three qualities	(सा) - it परिणामवती - changing
माया - māyā	नित्या - eternal
ब्रह्मपरात्मशासिता - that which is governed by Akṣara and Puruṣottama	जडा - non-sentient विस्मयकारिणी च - and as- tounding
स्यात् - is	(स्यात्) - is

Māyā, which is of three qualities,⁵¹ is governed by Akṣara and Puruṣottama. It is ever-changing, eternal, non-sentient, and astounding. (119)

⁵¹ See verse 123.

5.4 Māyā's Role in Creation and Transmigration

सृष्ट्युपादानभूतेयं हेतुरनादिसंसृतेः ।
साधनात् परशक्तिश्च ममत्वाऽहन्त्वकारणम् ॥ १२० ॥

sṛṣṭyupādānabhūteyaṃ heturanādisaṁsṛteḥ,
sāadhanāt paraśaktiśca mamatvā'hantvakāraṇam.

पदच्छेदः - सृष्ट्युपादानभूता, इयम्, हेतुः, अनादिसंसृतेः, साधनात्, परशक्तिः, च,
ममत्वाऽहन्त्वकारणम् ॥

अन्वयः

इयम् (माया) - this māyā	ममत्व-अहन्त्व-कारणम् - the
सृष्टि-उपादानभूता - is the ma-	cause of 'I-ness' and 'my-
terial cause of creation	ness'
अनादिसंसृतेः - of the eternal	साधनात् च - and because it
cycle of birth and death	is an instrument
हेतुः - the cause	परशक्तिः - Paramātman's
	power

This māyā is the material cause of the world, the source of the eternal cycle of birth and death, and the impetus behind mamatva ('my-ness') and ahantva ('I-ness').⁵² As an instrument, it is also one of Paramātman's many powers. (120)

⁵² Mamatva and ahantva, or 'my-ness' and 'I-ness', respectively, have been loosely translated as 'possessiveness' and 'ego' in this chapter's introduction.

अनाद्यज्ञानरूपेयं विक्षेपमोहकारिणी ।
 प्रमादो लौकिके रागः प्राकृता धीर्हरौ गुरौ ॥ १२१ ॥

anādyajñānarūpeyaṃ vikṣepamohakāriṇī,
 pramādo laukike rāgaḥ prakṛtā dhīrharau gurau.

पदच्छेदः - अनाद्यज्ञानरूपा, इयम्, विक्षेपमोहकारिणी, प्रमादः, लौकिके, रागः,
 प्राकृता, धीः, हरौ, गुरौ ॥

अन्वयः

इयम् (माया) - this māyā	प्रमादः - carelessness
अनादि-अज्ञानरूपा - appears in the form of beginning- less ignorance	हरौ गुरौ (च) - and in Paramātman and the Akṣarabrahman guru
विक्षेपमोहकारिणी - is that which causes obstacles and delusion	प्राकृता - worldly धीः - disposition (च) - and (तया कार्यन्ते) - are caused by it
लौकिके - in worldly objects	
रागः - attachment	

This māyā is characterised as ignorance that has no beginning. It engenders obstacles and delusion. Moreover, it instigates carelessness and attachment towards worldly objects and causes one to see Paramātman and the Akṣarabrahman guru as worldly figures. (121)

5.5 Māyā's Various Names

मायैव प्रकृतिः प्रोक्ता तमोऽन्धकारशब्दिता ।

स्वभाववासनाद्याश्च तस्याः स्युर्विविधाऽभिधाः ॥ १२२ ॥

māyaiva prakṛtiḥ proktā tamo'ndhakārādiśabditā,
svabhāvavāsanādyāśca tasyāḥ syurvividhā'bhidhāḥ.

पदच्छेदः - माया, एव, प्रकृतिः, प्रोक्ता, तमोऽन्धकारशब्दिता, स्वभाववासनाद्याः,
च, तस्याः, स्युः, विविधाऽभिधाः ॥

अन्वयः

माया - māyā

तस्याः - its

एव - indeed

स्वभाववासनाद्याः - svabhāva

प्रकृतिः - prakṛti

(inherent nature), vāsanā
(desire), etc.

प्रोक्ता - is called

च - and

(सा) - it

विविधाऽभिधाः - various
names

तमोऽन्धकारशब्दिता - is

referred to by the words

tamas and andhakāra

स्युः - are

(darkness)

Māyā is known as prakṛti. It is also referred to by the words tamas and andhakāra (darkness). Furthermore, it is known by labels such as svabhāva (inherent nature) and vāsanā (desire). (122)

5.6 Māyā's Three Qualities

सत्त्वं रजस्तमश्चेति त्रयः स्युः प्रकृतेर्गुणाः ।
अन्योऽन्याऽभिभवाश्चैव मिथः संमिश्रिताः सदा ॥ १२३ ॥

sattvaṃ rajastamaśceti trayah syuḥ prakṛterguṇāḥ,
anyo'nyā'bhibhavāścaiva mithaḥ sammiśritāḥ sadā.

पदच्छेदः - सत्त्वम्, रजः, तमः, च, इति, त्रयः, स्युः, प्रकृतेः, गुणाः,
अन्योऽन्याऽभिभवाः, च, एव, मिथः, संमिश्रिताः, सदा ॥

अन्वयः

सत्त्वम् - sattva	स्युः - are
रजः - rajas	(ते) - they
तमः - tamas	सदा - ever
च - and	अन्योऽन्याऽभिभवाः - subdued by one another
इति - the aforementioned	च - and
त्रयः - three	मिथः - mutually
प्रकृतेः - māyā's	संमिश्रिताः - blended
गुणाः - qualities	एव - indeed

Sattva, rajas, and tamas are māyā's three qualities. These qualities are ever subdued by one another and are mutually intertwined. (123)

5.7 Overcoming Māyā

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन् साधर्म्यं ब्रह्मणा भवेत् ।
गुणातीतं गुरुं प्राप्य भक्तिश्च परमात्मनि ॥ १२४ ॥

guṇānetānatītya trīn sādharmaṃ brahmaṇa bhavet,
guṇātītaṃ guruṃ prāpya bhaktiśca paramātmani.

पदच्छेदः - गुणान्, एतान्, अतीत्य, त्रीन्, साधर्म्यम्, ब्रह्मणा, भवेत्, गुणातीतम्,
गुरुम्, प्राप्य, भक्तिः, च, परमात्मनि ॥

अन्वयः

गुणातीतम् - one who is above māyā's qualities	ब्रह्मणा (सह) - with Akṣarabrahman
गुरुम् - guru	साधर्म्यम् - likeness
प्राप्य - having attained	भवेत् - can occur
एतान् - these	परमात्मनि - in Paramātman
त्रीन् - three	च - and
गुणान् - qualities	भक्तिः - bhakti
अतीत्य - having transcend- ed	(भवेत्) - can occur

Having attained the guṇātīta guru and transcended these three qualities of māyā, one can achieve likeness with Akṣarabrahman and offer bhakti to Paramātman. (124)

एवं परब्रह्मस्वामिनारायणप्रबोधित-ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुणातीतगुरुपरम्परोपबृंहित-
 ब्रह्मविद्यालक्षणाऽक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनप्रतिपादके
 साधुभट्टेशदासविरचिते
 स्वामिनारायणसिद्धान्तसुधाऽऽख्ये शास्त्रेऽस्मिन्
 समाप्तं मायाधारा नाम
 पञ्चमं प्रकरणम् ॥

In this way ends the fifth chapter, known as the 'Māyā-dhārā', of Sadhu Bhadrashdas' *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*, a text that substantiates the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, which is characterised as brahmavidyā, was taught by Parabrahman Swaminarayan, and has been fostered by the lineage of brahma-svarūpa, guṇātīta gurus.

Chapter 6

Jīva-dhārā

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed māyā, the entity that prevents a person from obtaining valid knowledge. It also explained how one can overcome māyā. The next two chapters describe the jīva and īśvara, the entities that māyā restricts and the beings that overcome māyā to attain liberation.

The present chapter takes up the jīva as its subject of inquiry. It first offers an etymological analysis of the term ‘jīva’, arguing that it is known by this term because it brings the body to life and is sentient in its own respect. The author then describes the jīva’s three bodies and states of being that characterise its existence so long as it is bound by māyā. He also states, however, that the jīva is inherently separate from and superior to these three bodies and states of being. Upon liberation, it sheds its bodies and states of being and takes upon a fourth body (the brāhmavigraha) and enjoys a fourth state of being (brāhmi sthiti).

The jīva can never act on its own. Paramātman, however, graces it with the power to desire, know, and act; moreover, he grants it a body through which it can exercise these faculties.

The author concludes this chapter with a discussion of the

jīva's inherent nature. He posits, first, that the jīva is eternal. It is said to be born and die, but this is only due to its association and disassociation with various bodies during the cycle of transmigration. Furthermore, the jīva resides within the body and empowers its functions, yet is separate from it. It is inherently blissful and also embodies bliss. Nonetheless, the level of bliss it enjoys is much lesser than the bliss of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. Lastly, the author notes that the jīva is intrinsically pure; even though it is bound by māyā, it remains fundamentally unadulterated.

Indeed, understanding the jīva's nature is essential to the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's most significant spiritual praxis, which involves eliminating body consciousness, realising one's identity as the jīva, and attaining cognitive oneness with Akṣarabrahman. According to the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, this realisation is the only way to offer unhindered bhakti to Parabrahman and thus secure one's liberation.

6.2 Benediction

The author begins this sixth chapter by bowing to Akṣara and Puruṣottama, the entities that sustain the jīva and compassionately guide it to liberation.

इच्छाज्ञानक्रियाशक्तेर्जीवानां यः प्रदायकः ।

वन्दे तं मुक्तिदातारमक्षरपुरुषोत्तमम् ॥ १२५ ॥

icchājñānakriyāśakterjīvānāṃ yaḥ pradāyakaḥ,
vande taṃ muktidātāramakṣarapuruṣottamam.

पदच्छेदः - इच्छाज्ञानक्रियाशक्तेः, जीवानाम्, यः, प्रदायकः, वन्दे, तम्,
मुक्तिदातारम्, अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमम् ॥

अन्वयः

यः - the entity which

तम् - to this entity

जीवानाम् - to the jīva

मुक्तिदातारम् - the granter of
liberation

इच्छाज्ञानक्रियाशक्तेः - of the
strength to desire, know,
and act

अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमम् - Akṣara-Pu-
ruṣottama

प्रदायकः - the giver

वन्दे - I bow

I bow to Akṣara-Puruṣottama, who gives the jīva the strength to desire, know, and act and grants the jīva liberation.
(125)

6.3 An Etymological Analysis

जीवयति स्वदेहं यो जीवति च स्वयं यतः ।

तस्माद्धि चेतनाऽऽत्माऽयं जीव इति प्रकीर्तितः ॥ १२६ ॥

jīvayati svadehaṃ yo jīvati ca svayaṃ yataḥ,
tasmāddhi cetanā'tmā'yaṃ jīva iti prakīrtitaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - जीवयति, स्वदेहम्, यः, जीवति, च, स्वयम्, यतः, तस्मात्, हि,
चेतनाऽऽत्मा, अयम्, जीवः, इति, प्रकीर्तितः ॥

अन्वयः

यतः - because

तस्माद् - due to this

स्वयम् - itself

हि - certainly

जीवति - lives

अयम् - this

यः - that which

चेतनाऽऽत्मा - the sentient

च - and

ātman

स्वदेहम् - its body

जीवः - jīva

जीवयति - brings to life

इति - the aforementioned

प्रकीर्तितः - is called

This sentient ātman is called the jīva because it lives and enables the body to live.⁵³ (126)

⁵³ The Saṃskṛta root verb 'jīva' means 'to live'. The causitive form of this verb means 'to make live'. (Sāyaṇacārya 109)

6.4 The Jīva's Three Bodies & States of Being

स्थूलमेकं तथा सूक्ष्मं तृतीयं कारणं मतम्।
तस्य त्रीणि शरीराणि यद्बन्धात् संसृतिं गतः ॥ १२७ ॥

sthūlamekaṃ tathā sūkṣmaṃ tṛtīyaṃ kāraṇaṃ matam,
tasya trīṇi śarīrāṇi yadbandhāt saṁsṛtiṃ gataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - स्थूलम्, एकम्, तथा, सूक्ष्मम्, तृतीयम्, कारणम्, मतम्, तस्य, त्रीणि,
शरीराणि, यद्बन्धात्, संसृतिम्, गतः ॥

अन्वयः

तस्य - its (the jīva's)	त्रीणि - three
एकम् - one	शरीराणि - bodies
स्थूलम् - physical	मतम् - are recognised
तथा - and	यद्बन्धात् - due to whose bondage
सूक्ष्मम् - subtle	(जीवः) - the jīva
तृतीयम् - third	संसृतिम् - the cycle of birth and death
(च) - and	गतः - attains
कारणम् - causal	
(इति) - the aforemen- tioned	

The physical, subtle, and causal are recognised as the jīva's three bodies. The bonds of these bodies cause the jīva to attain the cycle of birth and death. (127)

Once a person who has attained liberation deceases, the jīva sheds the three bodies mentioned above and takes upon a fourth body, a divine figure that is known as a brāhmavigraha.

एतद्देहत्रयाद् भिन्नो जीवात्माऽयं सनातनः ।

लभते ब्रह्मलोके तु चतुर्थं ब्राह्मविग्रहम् ॥ १२८ ॥

etaddehatrayād bhinno jīvātma'yaṁ sanātanaḥ,
labhate brahmaloke tu caturthaṁ brāhmavigraham.

पदच्छेदः - एतद्देहत्रयात्, भिन्नः, जीवात्मा, अयम्, सनातनः, लभते, ब्रह्मलोके,
तु, चतुर्थम्, ब्राह्मविग्रहम् ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् - this

जीवात्मा - jīvātman

एतद्देहत्रयाद् - from these
three bodies

भिन्नः - that which is dis-
tinct

सनातनः (च) - and that
which is eternal

ब्रह्मलोके - in

Akṣaradhāman

तु - moreover

(सः) - it

चतुर्थम् - fourth

ब्राह्मविग्रहम् - brāhmavigraha

लभते - attains

This jīvātman⁵⁴ is distinct from these three bodies and is eternal. In Akṣaradhāman, it attains a fourth body, which is known as a brāhmavigraha.⁵⁵ (128)

⁵⁴ The jīva can also be known, interchangeably, as the 'ātman' and the 'jīvātman'.
Often, it is translated as 'soul'.

⁵⁵ See verse 173.

जागरणं तथा स्वप्नः सुषुप्तिश्चेति बुध्यते।

बद्धानां न तु मुक्तानां तेषां ब्रह्मणि संस्थितेः ॥ १२९ ॥

jāgaraṇaṃ tathā svapnaḥ suṣuptiśceti budhyate,
baddhānāṃ na tu muktānāṃ teṣāṃ brahmaṇi saṁsthiteḥ.

पदच्छेदः - जागरणम्, तथा, स्वप्नः, सुषुप्तिः, च, इति, बुध्यते, बद्धानाम्, न, तु,
मुक्तानाम्, तेषाम्, ब्रह्मणि, संस्थितेः ॥

अन्वयः

जागरणम् - waking	बुध्यते - are known
तथा - and	(एताः) - these states
स्वप्नः - dream	बद्धानाम् - of bound jīvas
सुषुप्तिः - deep sleep	न - not
च - and	तु - however
इति - the aforementioned	मुक्तानाम् - of liberated jīvas
(जीवस्य) - the jīva's	तेषां ब्रह्मणि संस्थितेः - due to
(अवस्थाः) - states	their qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman.

Waking, dream, and deep sleep are the jīva's three states. These states apply to bound jīvas. However, they do not apply to released jīvas, as such entities have attained qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman. (129)

One who has attained liberation rises above these three states and enjoys a fourth state, that of oneness with Akṣarabrahman.

तूर्याऽवस्था स्थितिर्ब्राह्मी मुक्तिरूपा प्रकीर्तिता ।

जीवतोऽपि भवेल्लभ्या जाग्रदादित्रयात् परा ॥ १३० ॥

tūryā'vasthā sthitirbrāhmī muktirūpā prakīrtitā,
jīvato'pi bhavellabhyā jāgradāditrayāt parā.

पदच्छेदः - तूर्याऽवस्था, स्थितिः, ब्राह्मी, मुक्तिरूपा, प्रकीर्तिता, जीवतः, अपि, भवेत्, लभ्या, जाग्रदादित्रयात्, परा ॥

अन्वयः

जाग्रदादित्रयात् - from the
waking, etc., three states.

परा - the transcendent

ब्राह्मी स्थितिः - the state of
oneness with Akṣarabrah-
man

प्रकीर्तिता - known as

(एषा) - this

मुक्तिरूपा - the form of
liberation

तूर्याऽवस्था - the fourth state

जीवतः - while being alive

अपि - despite

लभ्या - attainable

भवेत् - can be

The state of being one with Akṣarabrahman transcends the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. This condition is known as the state of liberation. This fourth state can be attained while living.⁵⁶ (130)

⁵⁶ The Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana holds that there are two types of liberation: jivan-mukti (that which is experienced while a person is alive) and videha-mukti (that which is experienced after a person deceases). The state of realisation enjoyed in both are identical. For more, see verses 169-70, 171-78.

6.5 How Paramātman Empowers the Jīva

इच्छाशक्तिः पराल्लब्धा ज्ञानशक्तिस्तथैव च ।

क्रियाशक्तिः पराल्लब्धा जीवेन कृपया प्रभोः ॥ १३१ ॥

icchāśaktiḥ parāllabdha jñānaśaktistathaiva ca,
kriyāśaktiḥ parāllabdha jīvena kṛpayā prabhoḥ.

पदच्छेदः - इच्छाशक्तिः, परात्, लब्धा, ज्ञानशक्तिः, तथा, एव, च, क्रियाशक्तिः,
परात्, लब्धा, जीवेन, कृपया, प्रभोः ॥

अन्वयः

प्रभोः कृपया - by Paramāt-
man's grace

तथा एव - in the same way

जीवेन - by the jīva

ज्ञानशक्तिः - the ability to
know

परात् (परमात्मतः) - from
Paramātman

क्रियाशक्तिः च - and the
ability to act

इच्छाशक्तिः - the ability to
desire

परात् (परमात्मतः) - from
Paramātman

लब्धा - is acquired

लब्धा - is acquired

From Paramātman, and by Paramātman's grace, the jīva acquires the ability to desire, know, and act. (131)

6.6 The Jīva's Inherent Nature

जन्म नास्ति मृतिर्नास्ति नित्य आत्मा सनातनः ।

देहयोगविभागाभ्यां जातो मृतोऽयमुच्यते ॥ १३२ ॥

janma nāsti mṛtirnāsti nitya ātmā sanātanaḥ,
dehayogavibhāgābhyāṃ jāto mṛto'yamucyate.

पदच्छेदः - जन्म, न, अस्ति, मृतिः, न, अस्ति, नित्यः, आत्मा, सनातनः,
देहयोगविभागाभ्याम्, जातः, मृतः, अयम्, उच्यते ॥

अन्वयः

(जीवस्य) - the jīva's

(अस्ति) - is

जन्म - birth

अयम् - this (the jīva)

न अस्ति - does not occur

देहयोगविभागाभ्याम् - through
association and disassociation
with the body

मृतिः - death

नास्ति - does not occur

जातः - born

आत्मा - the ātman

मृतः - dead

सनातनः - that which exists
forever

(इति) - the aforementioned

नित्यः - that which is
eternal

उच्यते - is said to be

The jīva is not born, nor does it die. It is eternal and ever-lasting. It is said to undergo birth and death merely due to its association and disassociation with the body. (132)

देहस्थो देहभिन्नोऽयं देहेन्द्रियप्रकाशकः ।

देहादेस्तं विना नैव स्वकार्येषु प्रवर्तनम् ॥ १३३ ॥

dehas tho dehabhinno'yaṃ dehendriyaprakāśakaḥ,
dehādestaṃ vinā naiva svakāryeṣu pravartanam.

पदच्छेदः - देहस्थः, देहभिन्नः, अयम्, देहेन्द्रियप्रकाशकः, देहादेः, तम्, विना, न,
एव, स्वकार्येषु, प्रवर्तनम् ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् (जीवः) - this jīva

विना - without

देहस्थः - that which resides
in the body

देहादेः - of the body and
other [instruments that
make up the physical
being]

(अपि) - however

देहभिन्नः - that which is
separate from the body

स्वकार्येषु - in their respec-
tive tasks

देहेन्द्रियप्रकाशकः - that which
illuminates the body and
the senses

प्रवर्तनम् - engagement

तम् - it

न एव - certainly is not

(शक्यम्) - possible

The jīva is distinct from the body, despite dwelling in it. It illuminates the body and the senses. Indeed, neither the body nor the senses can engage in their respective tasks in its absence. (133)

सुखी च सुखरूपोऽयं शास्त्रैः परिकीर्तितः ।

सुखाच्चाऽस्य समुत्कृष्टं सुखं ब्रह्मपरात्मनोः ॥ १३४ ॥

sukhī ca sukarūpo'yaṁ śāstraiḥ parikīrtitaḥ,
sukhācchā'sya samutkṛṣṭaṁ sukhaṁ brahmaparātmanoḥ.

पदच्छेदः - सुखी, च, सुखरूपः, अयम्, शास्त्रैः, परिकीर्तितः, सुखात्, च, अस्य,
समुत्कृष्टम्, सुखम्, ब्रह्मपरात्मनोः ॥

अन्वयः

शास्त्रैः - by the śāstras

अयम् (जीवः) - this jīva

सुखी - blissful

सुखरूपः - that which em-
bodies bliss

च - and

परिकीर्तितः - is described

अस्य (जीवस्य) सुखात् - than
this jīva's bliss

च - and

ब्रह्मपरात्मनोः - Akṣarabrah-
man's and Paramātman's

सुखम् - happiness

समुत्कृष्टम् - far greater

The śāstras describe that the jīva is blissful and that it em-
bodies bliss. However, they also state that the happiness of
Akṣarabrahman and Paramātman is far greater than that of the
jīva. (134)

जीवात्मा नित्यशुद्धोऽस्ति मायामलविवर्जितः ।

आवरकाऽपि माया तु जीवाऽन्तर्नैव गच्छति ॥ १३५ ॥

jīvātmā nityaśuddho'sti māyāmalavivarjitah,
āvarakā'pi māyā tu jīvā'ntarnaiva gacchati.

पदच्छेदः - जीवात्मा, नित्यशुद्धः, अस्ति, मायामलविवर्जितः, आवरका, अपि,
माया, तु, जीवाऽन्तः, न, एव, गच्छति ॥

अन्वयः

जीवात्मा - the jīvātman

नित्यशुद्धः - that which is
eternally pure

मायामलविवर्जितः - that
which is untouched by
impurity in the form of
māyā

अस्ति - is

आवरका - that which con-
ceals

माया - māyā

अपि - even

जीवाऽन्तः - inside of the jīva

तु - yet

न एव - absolutely does not

गच्छति - go

The jīva is eternally pure and untouched by impurity in the form of māyā. Even though māyā conceals the jīva, it is unable to penetrate it. (135)

एवं परब्रह्मस्वामिनारायणप्रबोधित-ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुणातीतगुरुपरम्परोपबृंहित-
 ब्रह्मविद्यालक्षणाऽक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनप्रतिपादके
 साधुभद्रेशदासविरचिते
 स्वामिनारायणसिद्धान्तसुधाऽऽख्ये शास्त्रेऽस्मिन्
 समाप्तं जीवधारा नाम
 षष्ठं प्रकरणम् ॥

In this way ends the sixth chapter, known as the 'Jiva-dhārā', of Sadhu Bhadreshdas' *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*, a text that substantiates the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, which is characterised as brahmavidyā, was taught by Parabrahman Swaminarayan, and has been fostered by the lineage of brahmas-varūpa, guṇātīta gurus.

Chapter 7

Īśvara-dhārā

7.1 Introduction

Īśvaras are ontologically distinct from and superior to jīvas. In fact, they get their name, ‘īśvara’, due to the distinct virtues or enhanced faculties (aiśvarya) that they enjoy and employ in overseeing creation. However, like jīvas, they are sentient, eternal, and bound by māyā; they are also many in number. Furthermore, the īśvaras experience the fruit of their karma. Although they possess three bodies and enjoy three states, the names of their bodies and states are different from those of the jīvas. Namely, their three bodies are the virāṭ, sūtrātmā, and avyākṛta; their three states are creation, sustenance, and dissolution. Again like the jīvas, they remain eternally distinct from all of their bodies and states.

The īśvaras yearn for liberation. However, liberation can only be attained by overcoming māyā. Such transcendence, moreover, is only possible through the association of the manifest, Akṣarabrahman guru. Therefore, the īśvaras take birth in human form in order to enjoy the company of this guru and attain release from the transmigratory cycle.

7.2 An Etymological Analysis

ऐश्वर्यादीश्वरः प्रोक्तो जीवाद् भिन्नः स्वरूपतः ।

ज्ञानं ज्ञाता च नित्यश्च मायाबद्धोऽस्त्यनादितः ॥ १३६ ॥

aiśvaryādiśvaraḥ prokto jīvād bhinnāḥ svarūpataḥ,
jñānaṁ jñātā ca nityaśca māyābaddho'styanāditaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - ऐश्वर्यात्, ईश्वरः, प्रोक्तः, जीवात्, भिन्नः, स्वरूपतः, ज्ञानम्, ज्ञाता, च,
नित्यः, च, मायाबद्धः, अस्ति, अनादितः ॥

अन्वयः

स्वरूपतः - ontologically	(एषः) - it
जीवाद् - from the jīva	ज्ञाता - knower
भिन्नः - distinct	च - and
ऐश्वर्याद् - due to its powers	नित्यः - eternal
(च) - and	च - and
ईश्वरः - the īśvara	अनादितः - eternally
प्रोक्तः - is called	मायाबद्धः - bound by māyā
(एतस्य स्वरूपम्) - its form	अस्ति - is
ज्ञानम् - wisdom	

The īśvara is ontologically distinct from the jīva. It is known as 'īśvara' due to its significant powers.⁵⁷ It embodies wisdom and is the knower. It is eternal and has always been bound by māyā. (136)

⁵⁷ The word 'īśvara' comes from the Saṃskṛta root verb 'īśa', which expresses the act of sovereignty (Sāyaṇācārya 231); the īśvaras' nomenclature thus signifies that they possess enhanced divine faculties that facilitate their governance of the brahmāṇḍas through such tasks as creation, sustenance, and destruction.

7.3 The Īśvara's Nature & Form

अत्यन्तमसमर्थोऽपि ब्रह्मणः परब्रह्मणः ।

जीवाच्छ्रेष्ठतयोक्तोऽयमनाद्यैश्वर्यहेतुतः ॥ १३७ ॥

atyantamasamartho'pi brahmaṇaḥ parabrahmaṇaḥ,
jīvācchreṣṭhatayokto'yamanādyaiśvaryaHetutaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - अत्यन्तम्, असमर्थः, अपि, ब्रह्मणः, परब्रह्मणः, जीवात्, श्रेष्ठतया,
उक्तः, अयम्, अनाद्यैश्वर्यहेतुतः ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् - this (the īśvara)

अनादि-ऐश्वर्य-हेतुतः - due to
the eternal possession of
divine faculties

जीवात् - than the jīva

श्रेष्ठतया - as being greater

उक्तः - is described

अपि - although

ब्रह्मणः - compared to

Akṣarabrahman

परब्रह्मणः (च) - and com-
pared to Parabrahman

अत्यन्तम् - extremely

असमर्थः - insignificant

(अस्ति) - is

Although the īśvara is described as being transcendent to the jīva due to its eternal powers, it is exceptionally insignificant when compared to Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman. (137)

स्वकर्मफलभोक्ताऽयं ज्ञेयोऽच्छेद्यादिलक्षणः ।

मोक्षाऽर्होऽनेकसंख्याकश्चेतनोऽणुः शरीरभाक् ॥ १३८ ॥

svakarmaphalabhoktā'yaṁ jñeyo'cchedyādilakṣaṇaḥ,
mokṣā'rho'nekasaṁkhyākaścetano'ṇuḥ śarīrabhāk.

पदच्छेदः - स्वकर्मफलभोक्ता, अयम्, ज्ञेयः, अच्छेद्यादिलक्षणः, मोक्षाऽर्हः,
अनेकसंख्याकः, चेतनः, अणुः, शरीरभाक् ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् - this (īśvara)

स्वकर्मफलभोक्ता - that which
is the experiencer of the
fruits of its karmas

अच्छेद्यादिलक्षणः - that which
possesses qualities such as
indivisibility, etc.

मोक्षाऽर्हः - that which is
entitled to liberation

चेतनः - that which is
sentient

अणुः - that which is min-
ute

शरीरभाक् - and attains a
material body

अनेकसंख्याकः - that
which is numerous

ज्ञेयः - should be known as

The īśvara experiences the fruits of its karmas. It possesses qualities such as indivisibility and is entitled to liberation. It is minute, sentient, and attains a material body. There are countless such īśvaras. (138)

7.4 The Īśvara's Three Bodies & States of Being

विराडथ च सूत्रात्मा तृतीयोऽव्याकृतस्तथा ।

ईश्वरस्य त्रयो देहाः सहजानन्दबोधिताः ॥ १३९ ॥

virāḍatha ca sūtrātmā tṛtiyo'vyākṛtastathā,
īśvarasya trayo dehāḥ saha-jānandabodhitāḥ.

पदच्छेदः - विराट्, अथ, च, सूत्रात्मा, तृतीयः, अव्याकृतः, तथा, ईश्वरस्य, त्रयः, देहाः, सहजानन्दबोधिताः ॥

अन्वयः

अथ - as follows

(इति) - the aforementioned

विराट् - virāṭ

ईश्वरस्य - the īśvara's

सूत्रात्मा - sūtrātmā

त्रयः - three

तथा च - and

देहाः - bodies

तृतीयः - the third

सहजानन्दप्रबोधिताः - taught
by Sahajanand (Swaminara-
yan)

अव्याकृतः - avyākṛta

Sahajanand (Swaminarayan) taught that the bodies of the īśvara are the virāṭ, sūtrātmā, and the third, the avyākṛta. (139)

उत्पत्तिश्च स्थितिश्चैव प्रलयश्चेति यत् त्रयम् ।

तदवस्थास्तु विज्ञेया यया बद्धोऽनुतिष्ठति ॥ १४० ॥

utpattiśca sthitiścaiva pralayaśceti yat trayam,
tadavasthāstu vijñeyā yayā baddho'nutiṣṭhati.

पदच्छेदः - उत्पत्तिः, च, स्थितिः, च, एव, प्रलयः, च, इति, यत्, त्रयम्, तदवस्थाः,
तु, विज्ञेयाः, यया, बद्धः, अनुतिष्ठति ॥

अन्वयः

उत्पत्तिः - creation	त्रयम् - group of three
च - and	तदवस्थाः - its (the īśvara's) states of being
स्थितिः - sustenance	तु - indeed
च - and	विज्ञेयाः - should be under- stood
प्रलयः - destruction	यया - that by which
च - and	(ईश्वरः) - the īśvara
एव - indeed	बद्धः - bound
इति - the aforementioned	अनुतिष्ठति - remains
यद् - that	

Creation, sustenance, and destruction are the īśvara's three states of being. The īśvara remains bound by these states. (140)

एवं परब्रह्मस्वामिनारायणप्रबोधित-ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुणातीतगुरुपरम्परोपबृंहित-
 ब्रह्मविद्यालक्षणाऽक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनप्रतिपादके
 साधुभट्टेशदासविरचिते
 स्वामिनारायणसिद्धान्तसुधाऽऽख्ये शास्त्रेऽस्मिन्
 समाप्तमीश्वरधारा नाम
 सप्तमं प्रकरणम् ॥

In this way ends the seventh chapter, known as the 'Īśvara-dhārā', of Sadhu Bhadreshdas' *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*, a text that substantiates the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, which is characterised as brahmavidyā, was taught by Parabrahman Swaminarayan, and has been fostered by the lineage of brahmasvarūpa, guṇātīta gurus.

Chapter 8

Sādhana-dhārā

8.1 Introduction

Chapters 2 through 7 of this book discussed Akṣara and Pu-ruṣottama's greatness; they also discussed the pramāṇas, or the tools one can use to understand this greatness, and māyā, the primary force that hinders such understanding. These chapters then discussed the jīva and īśvara, the two entities that māyā obstructs.

Now, the text moves forth to describe how jīvas and īśvaras can free themselves of māyā and attain liberation through spiritual endeavour, or sādhana. The primary endeavour described here is the attainment of brahmabhāva, an undertaking that encompasses all other spiritual practices. Brahmabhāva describes the state of having attained oneness with Akṣarabrahman. This condition involves 1) believing that which the Akṣarabrahman guru believes; 2) acting virtuously, just as this guru; and 3) engaging one's physical being in Paramātman's bhakti, as this guru has also done.

The author then explains that attaining oneness with Akṣarabrahman is needed for perfecting bhakti. He goes on to describe ekāntika dharma, or bhāgavata dharma, which is defined as bhakti that is accompanied by dharma, jñāna, and

vairāgya. Describing each of ekāntika dharma's facets, he explains that dharma is comprised of actions that fall in accordance with Paramātman's and the Akṣarabrahman guru's ordinances; jñāna is an understanding of one's congruence with Akṣarabrahman; vairāgya is detachment from all except for Akṣara and Puruṣottam; and bhakti is intense love for Paramātman and the guru. As the foremost of these four endeavours, bhakti manifests in nine ways. However, the greatest forms of bhakti are those that are centred on the manifest form of Paramātman. The author thus states that, after Parabrahman Swaminarayan's passing, one should offer bhakti to God through the Akṣarabrahman guru, through whom God manifests.

The chapter goes on to enumerate specific spiritual practices that the devotee is to undergo to obtain the guru's grace, which is essential for success on the spiritual path. The author concludes by stating that believing oneself to be brahmarūpa, or one with the Akṣarabrahman guru, is the foremost amongst these endeavours.

8.2 Benediction

The Sādhana-dhārā begins with a prayer to Parabrahman Swaminarayan and the Akṣarabrahman guru. Along with offering obeisance, this prayer also explains the essence of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's praxis and prays that the key aspects of this praxis may be imbibed.

साक्षाद्ब्रह्मस्वरूपे प्रकटगुरुवरे प्रीतिकाष्ठां विधाय
सङ्गेन स्वात्ममध्ये स्वयमपि च तथा ब्रह्मभावं प्रधाय ।
कार्या तत्रैव भक्त्या प्रकटहरिसुधीर्दिव्यभावं निधाय
सेव्यो ब्रह्मस्थदेवो भवभयतरणे स्वामिनारायणोऽयम् ॥ १४१ ॥

sakṣādbrahmasvarūpe prakṭaguruvare pritikaṣṭhām vidhāya,
saṅgena svātmamadhye svayamapi ca tathā brahmabhāvaṃ pradhāya.
kāryā tatraiva bhaktyā prakṭaharisudhīrdivyabhāvaṃ nidhāya
sevyo brahmasthadevo bhavabhayatarāṇe svāminārāyaṇo'yam.

पदच्छेदः - साक्षाद्ब्रह्मस्वरूपे, प्रकटगुरुवरे, प्रीतिकाष्ठां, विधाय, सङ्गेन,
स्वात्ममध्ये, स्वयम्, अपि, च, तथा, ब्रह्मभावम्, प्रधाय, कार्या, तत्र, एव,
भक्त्या, प्रकटहरिसुधीः, दिव्यभावम्, निधाय, सेव्यः, ब्रह्मस्थदेवः, भवभयतरणे,
स्वामिनारायणः, अयम् ॥

अन्वयः

साक्षाद्ब्रह्मस्वरूपे प्रकटगुरुवरे	(तस्य) सङ्गेन च - and
- within the manifest,	through the guru's associ-
brahmasvarūpa guru	ation

प्रीतिकाष्ठां - intense love	स्वात्ममध्ये - within one's
------------------------------	-----------------------------

विधाय - having cultivated	अयम् - this
---------------------------	-------------

स्वयम् अपि - oneself also

ब्रह्मभावम् - brahmabhāva

प्रधाय - having established

तथा - and

तत्र एव - there indeed

भक्त्या - with devotion

प्रकटगुरुहरिसुधीः - belief that
the manifest guru is the
form of God

कार्या - should be cultivat-
ed

दिव्यभावं च - and the un-
derstanding of inherent
divinity

निधाय - having established

भवभयतरणे - to overcome
the fear of saṃsāra

ब्रह्मस्थदेवः - the God that
resides in Akṣarabrahman

अयं स्वामिनारायणः - this
manifest [form of] Swam-
inarayan

सेव्यः - should be served

To overcome the fear of saṃsāra, one should serve the manifest Swaminarayan, who resides within the Akṣarabrahman guru. One should do so upon cultivating intense love for the manifest, Akṣarabrahman guru; establishing brahmabhāva in one's ātman through this guru's association; and offering bhakti with the understanding that the guru is inherently divine and is the very form of God. (141)

आज्ञोपासनसद्भावपक्षा हि जीवजीवनम् ।

देहि निश्चलनिष्ठार्थमक्षरपुरुषोत्तमे ॥ १४२ ॥

ājñopāśanasadbhāvapakṣā hi jīvajīvanam,
dehi niścalaniṣṭhārthamakṣarapuruṣottame.

पदच्छेदः - आज्ञोपासनसद्भावपक्षाः, हि, जीवजीवनम्, देहि, निश्चलनिष्ठार्थम्,
अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमे ॥

अन्वयः

आज्ञोपासनसद्भावपक्षाः - ājñā
(obedience to divine or-
dinances), upāsanā (wor-
shipful faith), sadbhāva
(fraternity) and pakṣa
(loyalty)

हि - indeed

जीवजीवनम् - the jīva's life
force

(अतः) - therefore

(हे गुरुहरे!) - O Guru-hari!

अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमे - in
Akṣara-Puruṣottama

निश्चलनिष्ठार्थम् - for unwav-
ering conviction

(एतान्) - these qualities

(नः) - upon us

देहि - bestow

Ājñā (obedience to divine ordinances), upāsanā (worshipful faith), sadbhāva (fraternity), and pakṣa (loyalty) indeed are the jīva's life force.⁵⁸ Therefore, O Guru-hari! Kindly bestow these qualities upon me so that I may develop unwavering conviction in Akṣara-Puruṣottama. (142)

⁵⁸Bhadreshdas writes at the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*'s outset that his work is a meditation on the teachings of Swaminarayan and the Akṣarabrahman gurus (p.5). In this spirit, the coagulation of the four spiritual practices described above stems from the ministry of Brahmasvarūpa Shastriji Maharaj, who explained that these four practices are vital to the jīva's spiritual progress; he referred to them as the jīva's very life force, or that which helps the jīva spiritually thrive and attain resolute conviction.

8.3 Attaining Oneness with Akṣarabrahman

Having invoked God's and the guru's blessings, the author now explains the importance of divine approval, grace, and attaining oneness with Akṣarabrahman in mastering the spiritual endeavours.

दयार्णवः कृपासाध्यः प्रसादात् सुलभा कृपा ।

ब्रह्मभावात् प्रसीदेच्च ह्यक्षरपुरुषोत्तमः ॥ १४३ ॥

dayārṇavaḥ kṛpāsādhyāḥ prasādāt sulabhā kṛpā,
brahmabhāvāt prasīdecca hyakṣarapuruṣottamaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - दयार्णवः, कृपासाध्यः, प्रसादात्, सुलभा, कृपा, ब्रह्मभावात्, प्रसीदेत्, च, हि, अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमः ॥

अन्वयः

अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमः - Akṣara-Puruṣottama

प्रसादात् - through divine favour

कृपासाध्यः - that which is attainable through grace

सुलभा - that which is easily achievable

दयार्णवः - that which is comparable to an ocean of compassion

कृपा - grace

(तस्य) - its

ब्रह्मभावात् - by attaining oneness with Akṣarabrahman

च - and

हि - indeed

प्रसीदेत् - is pleased

The entity of Akṣara-Puruṣottama, attainable through grace, is deeply compassionate. If one earns Akṣara-Puruṣottama's divine favour, its grace becomes easily achievable. Such divine favour is earned by achieving oneness with Akṣarabrahman. (143)

तस्माद्धि ब्रह्मभावोऽयं सम्यगिह निरूप्यते ।

सर्वसाधनराशिस्तु यस्मिन्नन्तर्गतः सदा ॥ १४४ ॥

tasmāddhi brahmabhāvo'yaṁ samyagiha nirūpyate,
sarvasāadhanarāśistu yasminnantargataḥ sadā.

पदच्छेदः - तस्मात्, हि, ब्रह्मभावः, अयम्, सम्यक्, इह, निरूप्यते, सर्वसाधनराशिः,
तु, यस्मिन्, अन्तर्गतः, सदा ॥

अन्वयः

तस्मात् - therefore

निरूप्यते - is explained

हि - certainly

यस्मिन् - within which

इह - here

तु - indeed

अयम् - this

सर्वसाधनराशिः - all spiritual
endeavours

ब्रह्मभावः - the disposi-
tion of being one with
Akṣarabrahman

सदा - always

अन्तर्गतः - are encompassed

सम्यक् - completely

Therefore, the principle of attaining oneness with Akṣarabrahman is thoroughly explained here. Indeed, all spiritual endeavours are forever encompassed within this practice. (144)

ब्रह्मगुणसमावाप्तिर्भक्तये परब्रह्मणः ।

ब्रह्मप्रसंगजा दिव्या कीर्तिता ब्रह्मरूपता ॥ १४५ ॥

brahmaguṇasamāvāptirbhaktaye parabrahmaṇaḥ,
brahmaprasaṅgajā divyā kīrtitā brahmarūpatā.

पदच्छेदः - ब्रह्मगुणसमावाप्तिः, भक्तये, परब्रह्मणः, ब्रह्मप्रसंगजा, दिव्या, कीर्तिता,
ब्रह्मरूपता ॥

अन्वयः

परब्रह्मणः भक्तये - for the
worship of Parabrahman

(इयं) दिव्या (स्थितिः) - this
divine state

ब्रह्मगुणसमावाप्तिः - the at-
tainment of Akṣarabrah-
man's qualities

ब्रह्मरूपता - the state of
being brahmarūpa

(आवश्यक) - is required

(इति) - the aforesaid

कीर्तिता - is described as

ब्रह्मप्रसंगजा - that which
arises through profound
association with the
Akṣarabrahman guru

The attainment of Akṣarabrahman's qualities is essential for worshipping Parabrahman. This divine spiritual state, which arises through profound association with the Akṣarabrahman guru, is also described as the state of being brahmarūpa. (145)

Becoming brahmarūpa has thus been defined as attaining oneness with Akṣarabrahman. The author now elaborates on what such oneness implies.

गुरोर्ज्ञानमिव ज्ञानं वर्तनमपि तत्समम् ।
देहार्पणं तथा भक्तौ ब्रह्मात्मैक्यं तदुच्यते ॥ १४६ ॥

gurorjñānamiva jñānaṁ vartanamapi tatsamam,
dehārpaṇaṁ tathā bhaktau brahmātmaikyam taducyate.

पदच्छेदः - गुरोः, ज्ञानम्, इव, ज्ञानम्, वर्तनम्, अपि, तत्समम्, देहार्पणम्, तथा, भक्तौ, ब्रह्मात्मैक्यम्, तत्, उच्यते ॥

अन्वयः

गुरोः - the guru's	भक्तौ - in worship
ज्ञानम् - understanding	देहार्पणम् - dedicating one's physical being
इव - like	तत् - this
ज्ञानम् - understanding	ब्रह्मात्मैक्यम् - the ātman's oneness with Akṣarabrahman
वर्तनम् - behaviour	
अपि - also	
तत्समम् - like the guru	उच्यते - is said to be
तथा - and	

Becoming one with Akṣarabrahman means having an understanding like that of the Akṣarabrahman guru, behaving virtuously like the guru, and dedicating one's physical being towards bhakti again just as the guru has done. (146)

परब्रह्मणि भक्तिं तु ब्रह्मभावोऽप्यपेक्षते ।
किमपि साधनं भक्तिं विना नैव प्रसिध्यति ॥ १४७ ॥

parabrahmaṇi bhaktiṁ tu brahmabhāvo'pyapekṣate,
kimapi sādhanam bhaktiṁ vinā naiva prasidhyati.

पदच्छेदः - परब्रह्मणि, भक्तिम्, तु, ब्रह्मभावः, अपि, अपेक्षते, किम्, अपि, साधनम्,
भक्तिम्, विना, न, एव, प्रसिध्यति ॥

अन्वयः

ब्रह्मभावः - brahmabhāva	(यतः) - because
अपि - even	किम् अपि साधनम् - no spiri- tual endeavour
परब्रह्मणि - towards Parabrahman	भक्तिम् - bhakti
भक्तिम् - bhakti	विना - without
तु - certainly	न एव - cannot indeed
अपेक्षते - requires	प्रसिध्यति - come to fruition

The state of brahmabhāva undoubtedly entails the worship of Parabrahman, as no spiritual endeavour can be accomplished without bhakti. (147)

8.4 Ekāntika Dharma

Encompassed within this Brāhmic state is ekāntika dharma, a collective name for the four spiritual endeavours of dharma, jñāna, vairāgya, and bhakti. The most significant amongst these endeavours is bhakti, which attains maturity in the presence of its counterparts.

धर्मो ज्ञानं च वैराग्यं भक्तिश्चैतैस्त्रिभिर्युता ।

ज्ञेय एकान्तिको धर्मः प्रभुप्रसादसाधनम् ॥ १४८ ॥

dharmo jñānaṃ ca vairāgyaṃ bhaktiścaitaistribhiryutā,
jñeya ekāntiko dharmah prabhuprasādasāadhanam.

पदच्छेदः - धर्मः, ज्ञानम्, च, वैराग्यम्, भक्तिः, च, एतैः, त्रिभिः, युता, ज्ञेयः,
एकान्तिकः, धर्मः, प्रभुप्रसादसाधनम् ॥

अन्वयः

धर्मः - dharma

च - and

ज्ञानम् - jñān (wisdom)

एकान्तिकः - ekāntika

वैराग्यं च - and vairāgya
(detachment)

धर्मः - dharma

ज्ञेयः - should be known as

एतैः - these

(अयं धर्मः) - this dharma

त्रिभिः - three

प्रभुप्रसादसाधनम् - the means

युता - accompanied by

to attain Paramātman's

भक्तिः - bhakti

grace

(अस्ति) - is

Bhakti that is accompanied by dharma, jñāna, and vairāgya should be known as ekāntika dharma. This ekāntika dharma is the means to attaining Paramātman's grace. (148)

अयं भागवतो धर्मः सम्बन्धादुच्यते हरेः ।

यस्य संस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवस्तु हरेरिह ॥ १४९ ॥

ayaṁ bhāgavato dharmāḥ sambandhādūcyate hareḥ,
yasya saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavastu hareriha.

पदच्छेदः - अयम्, भागवतः, धर्मः, सम्बन्धात्, उच्यते, हरेः, यस्य, संस्थापनार्थाय,
सम्भवः, तु, हरेः, इह ॥

अन्वयः

अयम् - this (ekāntika
dharma)

हरेः सम्बन्धात् - because
of its association with
Paramātman

भागवतः - bhāgavata

धर्मः - dharma

(इति) - the aforemen-
tioned

उच्यते - is called

यस्य - of that which

संस्थापनार्थाय - for the estab-
lishment

तु - indeed

हरेः - Paramātman's

इह - here

सम्भवः - incarnation

Ekāntika dharma is also called bhāgavata dharma because of its association with Paramātman.⁵⁹ Paramātman incarnates on earth to establish this sacred dharma.⁶⁰ (149)

⁵⁹ The Saṁskṛta term 'bhagavān' often refers to Paramātman. Here, its nominal base, 'bhagavat', has been derived through the use of a suffix to read 'bhāgavata', which means 'that which is related to Paramātman'. (Pāṇini Sūtra 4.3.120, 4.1.83; Govindācārya 186, 147).

⁶⁰ See Bhadrēśhaḍṣa's pivotal interpretations of the renowned *Bhagavadgītā* verses, 'svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt' (2.40) and 'yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata' (4.7-8) in the *Bhagavadgītā-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam* (p.42-50, 95-6).

अस्माद्धि सुतरां न्यूना धर्मा वर्णाऽऽश्रमोचिताः ।

केवला भक्तिहीनाश्च भगवद्योगवर्जिताः ॥ १५० ॥

asmāddhi sutarāṃ nyūnā dharmā varṇā”śramocitāḥ,
kevalā bhaktihīnāśca bhagavadhyogavarjitāḥ.

पदच्छेदः - अस्मात्, हि, सुतराम्, न्यूनाः, धर्माः, वर्णाऽऽश्रमोचिताः, केवलाः,
भक्तिहीनाः, च, भगवद्योगवर्जिताः ॥

अन्वयः

अस्माद् (भागवतधर्मात्) - than
this bhāgavata dharma

भगवद्योगवर्जिताः - that which
lacks the association of
Paramātman

भक्तिहीनाः च - and that
which lacks bhakti

केवलाः - only

वर्णाऽऽश्रमोचिताः - that
which is in accordance
with varṇa and āśrama

धर्माः - dharmas

हि - certainly

सुतराम् - extremely

न्यूनाः - insignificant

The dharma of varṇa and āśrama, when it lacks association with Paramātman and is deficient of bhakti, is exceptionally insignificant in comparison to this bhāgavata dharma. (150)

भक्तेरेवेह प्राधान्यं धर्मादिकचतुष्टये ।

भक्तेरङ्गतयैवैषां साधनत्वप्रबोधनात् ॥ १५१ ॥

bhaktereveha prādhānyam dharmādikacatuṣṭaye,
bhakteraṅgatayaivaiṣāṃ sādhanatvaprabodhanāt.

पदच्छेदः - भक्तेः, एव, इह, प्राधान्यम्, धर्मादिकचतुष्टये, भक्तेः, अङ्गतया, एव,
एषाम्, साधनत्वप्रबोधनात् ॥

अन्वयः

इह - here

(प्रवर्तते) - prevails

धर्मादिकचतुष्टये - amongst
dharma and the other
virtues that make up the
group of four [elements of
ekāntika dharma]

एषाम् - of these

भक्तेः - bhakti's

अङ्गतया - in reference to
their position as being
supplementary

भक्तेः - bhakti's

एव - indeed

एव - alone

साधनत्वप्रबोधनात् - because

प्राधान्यम् - predominance

they are described as tools

Bhakti alone is paramount amongst the four components of ekāntika dharma. This is said because the other three (dharma, jñāna, and vairāgya) are described as tools that are supplementary to bhakti.

8.5 Dharma

The author now elucidates the four components of ekāntika dharma, starting with dharma. He explains that dharma means following God's and the guru's ordinances, which is an endeavour that is open to people of all varṇas and āśramas.

आज्ञा हरेर्गुरोश्चैव सदाचारादिरूपिणी ।

शास्त्राऽऽदेशाऽऽत्मको धर्मो विधिनिषेधलक्षणः ॥ १५२ ॥

ājñā harerguroścaiva sadācārādirūpiṇī,
śāstra"deśa"tmako dharmo vidhiniṣedhalakṣaṇaḥ.

पदच्छेदः - आज्ञा, हरेः, गुरोः, च, एव, सदाचारादिरूपिणी, शास्त्राऽऽदेशात्मकः,
धर्मः, विधिनिषेधलक्षणः ॥

अन्वयः

हरेः - Paramātman's

गुरोः च - and the guru's

सदाचारादिरूपिणी - in the
form of moral living

आज्ञा - ordinance

(तथा) - and

शास्त्रादेशाऽऽत्मकः - in the
form of scriptural injunc-
tions

विधिनिषेधलक्षणः - charac-
terised by guidelines for
what to do and what not
to do

एव - alone

धर्मः - dharma

(अस्ति) - is

Dharma is defined as Paramātman's and the Akṣarabrahman guru's ordinance to live morally; it also entails scriptural injunctions that either promote or negate specific actions (152)

सदाचारादिनिष्ठो यो क्वापि वर्णस्थितो भवेत् ।

स एव साधुर्मन्तव्यः श्रेष्ठश्च धार्मिको बुधैः ॥ १५३ ॥

sadācārādiniṣṭho yo kvāpi varṇasthito bhavet,
sa eva sādhumantavyaḥ śreṣṭhaśca dhārmiko budhaiḥ.

पदच्छेदः - सदाचारादिनिष्ठः, यः, क्व, अपि, वर्णस्थितः, भवेत्, सः, एव, साधुः,
मन्तव्यः, श्रेष्ठः, च, धार्मिकः, बुधैः ॥

अन्वयः

यः - one who

एव - alone

सदाचारादिनिष्ठः - is firmly
rooted in moral living and
other such practices

बुधैः - by the wise

साधुः - noble

क्व अपि - no matter which

धार्मिकः - righteous

वर्णस्थितः भवेत् - varṇa such
a person belongs to

श्रेष्ठः - eminent

च - and

सः - this person

मन्तव्यः - is known

Only one who is firmly rooted in moral living, no matter which varṇa the person belongs to, is recognised by the wise as being noble, righteous, and eminent. (153)

The verse mentioned above is illustrated using a well-known example from the Swaminarayan fellowship's history:

सगरामादयः श्रेष्ठा साधवो धार्मिका मताः ।

ब्राह्मणवच्च पूज्यास्ते जात्या शूद्रा हि यद्यपि ॥ १५४ ॥

sagaramādayaḥ śreṣṭhā sādhave dhārmikā matāḥ,
brāhmaṇavacca pūjyāste jātyā śūdrā hi yadyapi.

पदच्छेदः - सगरामादयः, श्रेष्ठाः, साधवः, धार्मिकाः, मताः, ब्राह्मणवत्, च, पूज्याः,
ते, जात्या, शूद्राः, हि, यद्यपि ॥

अन्वयः

सगरामादयः (भक्ताः) - Sagarā-	यद्यपि - although
ma and other devotees	जात्या - by caste
श्रेष्ठाः - eminent	शूद्राः - śūdra
साधवः - noble	(तथापि) - yet still
धार्मिकाः - righteous	ब्राह्मणवत् - like Brāhmaṇas
च - and	हि - indeed
मताः - were known as	पूज्याः - were worthy of
ते - they	being venerated

Devotees like Sagarāma and others were known as eminent, noble, and righteous. Though born as Śūdras, they were worthy of being venerated as Brāhmaṇas.⁶¹ (154)

⁶¹ Sagarāma was a man who lived in the village of Limli. He came from a community that was considered to be low by the people of the time. Nonetheless, he was a faithful devotee who adhered to lofty ideals such as honesty, chastity, and purity. His righteous conduct had earned him great respect. Bhadrash-das notes in this verse that many such devotees were widely respected in the sampradāya. (Dave, *Bhagavān Śrī Svāmīnārāyaṇa*, Vol.5, 300). He further elaborates in the *Svāmīnārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* by stating that spirituality

8.6 Jñāna

The author now explains jñāna, the second facet of ekāntika dharma.

अहमात्माऽस्म्यहं ब्रह्म ब्रह्मरूपे मयि प्रभुः ।

इति साक्षाद् ब्रह्मयोगाद् यो भावः साऽऽत्मरूपता ॥ १५५ ॥

ahamātma'smyahaṁ brahma brahmarūpe mayi prabhuḥ,
iti sākṣād brahmayogād yo bhāvaḥ sā'tmarūpatā.

पदच्छेदः - अहम्, आत्मा, अस्मि, अहम्, ब्रह्म, ब्रह्मरूपे, मयि, प्रभुः, इति, साक्षात्, ब्रह्मयोगात्, यः, भावः, सा, आत्मरूपता ॥

अन्वयः

अहम् - I

इति - such

आत्मा - the ātman

यः - that which

अस्मि - am

भावः - belief

अहम् - I

साक्षाद् ब्रह्मयोगाद् - through
direct association with
Akṣarabrahman

ब्रह्म - Akṣarabrahman

(अस्मि) - am

सा - this

ब्रह्मरूपे मयि (आत्मनि) - in my

आत्मरूपता - the state of
being ātmarūpa

brahmarūpa ātman

प्रभुः - Paramātman

(उच्यते) - is called

(अस्ति) - resides

The state of being ātmarūpa means believing, through direct association with the brahmasvarūpa guru, 'I am the ātman', 'I am Akṣarabrahman', and 'Parabrahman resides in my brahmarūpa ātman'. (155)

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is not restricted to people of a certain caste. Instead, he says that spiritual perfection is an achievement that is open to all (Bhadreshdas 335-36). He expresses similar sentiments in the *Brahmasūtra-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam*'s 'śūgadhikaraṇa' (Bhadreshdas 120-21).

8.7 Vairāgya

The author then defines vairāgya, ekāntika dharma's third component.

ब्रह्मपरात्मभिन्नेषु रागाभावो विरागता ।
ज्ञानांऽशसहिता नित्यं भक्त्युपकारिणी भवेत् ॥ १५६ ॥

brahmaparātmaabhinneṣu rāgābhāvo virāgatā,
jñānāṃśasahitā nityaṃ bhaktyupakārīṇī bhavet.

पदच्छेदः - ब्रह्मपरात्मभिन्नेषु, रागाभावः, विरागता, ज्ञानांऽशसहिता, नित्यम्,
भक्त्युपकारिणी, भवेत् ॥

अन्वयः

विरागता - vairāgya	ज्ञानांशसहिता - with spiritual
(नाम) - means	wisdom
ब्रह्मपरात्मभिन्नेषु - in anything	(स्यात्) - if it is
other than Akṣarabrah-	(तदा एव) - then only
man and Parabrahman	भक्त्युपकारिणी - supplemen-
रागाभावः - dispassion	tal to bhakti
(सा अपि) - that also	भवेत् - is
नित्यम् - perennially	

Dispassion towards all except for Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman is vairāgya. However, such vairāgya only supplements bhakti if it is perennially equipped with spiritual wisdom. (156)

8.8 Bhakti

Now, the author elaborates on bhakti, the final and most essential component of ekāntika dharma.

भक्तिस्तु सहजानन्दे माहात्म्यज्ञानभूषिता ।

दिव्याऽनन्या परा प्रीतिलौकिकभाववर्जिता ॥ १५७ ॥

bhaktistu sahajānande māhātmyajñānabhūṣitā,
divyā'nanyā parā prītilaukikabhāvavarjitā.

भक्तिः, तु, सहजानन्दे, माहात्म्यज्ञानभूषिता, दिव्या, अनन्या, परा, प्रीतिः,
लौकिकभाववर्जिता ॥

अन्वयः

सहजानन्दे - for Sahajanand
(Swaminarayan)

अनन्या - singular

परा - extreme

माहात्म्यज्ञानभूषिता - orna-
mented with an under-
standing of [his] greatness.

प्रीतिः - love

तु - indeed

लौकिकभाववर्जिता - free of
worldly sentiments

भक्तिः - bhakti

(उच्यते) - is called

दिव्या - characterised by
divinity

Bhakti is known as extreme, singular love for Sahajanand (Swaminarayan) that is accompanied by an understanding of his greatness, characterised by divinity, and devoid of worldly sentiments. (157)

भक्तिर्नानाविधा प्रोक्ता श्रवणकीर्तनादिका ।

भक्ताऽभिरुचिभेदाद्धि तत्र वैविध्यदर्शनम् ॥ १५८ ॥

bhaktirnānāvidhā proktā śravaṇakīrtanādikā,
bhaktā'bhirucibhedāddhi tatra vaividhyadarśanam.

पदच्छेदः - भक्तिः, नानाविधा, प्रोक्ता, श्रवणकीर्तनादिका, भक्ताऽभिरुचिभेदात्, हि,
तत्र, वैविध्यदर्शनम् ॥

अन्वयः

भक्तिः - bhakti

श्रवणकीर्तनादिका - śravaṇa,
kīrtana, etc.

नानाविधा - of many types

प्रोक्ता - has been described

तत्र - there (in the subject
of bhakti)

भक्ताऽभिरुचिभेदाद् - due to
devotees' varying inclina-
tions

हि - indeed

वैविध्यदर्शनम् - the seeing of
variety

(वर्तते) - occurs

Bhakti has been described as being of many types, such as śravaṇa and kīrtana. Such variety occurs due to devotees' varying inclinations. (158)

Bhakti should be offered with an understanding of Paramātman's greatness. Here, the author defines such understanding as upāsanā. He then argues that such bhakti should be offered to Paramātman's manifest form, which presides amongst us through the Akṣarabrahman guru.

सर्वकर्ता समुत्कृष्टः साकृतिः प्रकटः सदा ।

इत्यादिगुरुलब्धा धीर्ज्ञेया हरेरुपासना ॥ १५९ ॥

sarvakartā samutkṛṣṭaḥ sākṛtiḥ prakṛtaḥ sadā,
ityādigurulabdhā dhīrjñeyā harerupāsanā.

पदच्छेदः - सर्वकर्ता, समुत्कृष्टः, साकृतिः, प्रकटः, सदा, इत्यादिगुरुलब्धा, धीः, ज्ञेया, हरेः, उपासना ॥

अन्वयः

(परमात्मा) - Paramātman

सर्वकर्ता - the omniagent

समुत्कृष्टः - that which is superior to all

सदा - eternally

साकृतिः - that which has form

प्रकटः (च) - and that which is manifest

इत्यादिगुरुलब्धा धीः - this and other such understanding attained from the Akṣarabrahman guru

हरेः - Paramātman's

उपासना - upāsanā

ज्ञेया - should be known as

Paramātman is the omniagent, is superior to all, forever possesses a distinct form, and is eternally manifest. This and other such understanding, acquired from the Akṣarabrahman guru, is to be known as upāsanā. (159)

प्रत्यक्षभक्तिरेवोक्ता श्रेष्ठा कृत्स्नफलप्रदा ।

नारायणस्वरूपेऽतो गुरुहरौ विधीयते ॥ १६० ॥

pratyakṣabhaktirevoktā śreṣṭhā kṛtsnaphalapradā,
nārāyaṇasvarūpe'to guruharau vidhīyate.

पदच्छेदः - प्रत्यक्षभक्तिः, एव, उक्ता, श्रेष्ठा, कृत्स्नफलप्रदा, नारायणस्वरूपे,
अतः, गुरुहरौ, विधीयते ॥

अन्वयः

प्रत्यक्षभक्तिः - manifest
bhakti (bhakti towards
God's manifest form)

एव - alone

श्रेष्ठा - the greatest [form
of devotion]

कृत्स्नफलप्रदा (च) - and the
giver of all fruits

उक्ता - is said to be

अतः - therefore

नारायणस्वरूपे गुरुहरौ - to-
wards the guru-hari, who
is the form of Nārāyaṇa

(इयं भक्तिः) - such bhakti

विधीयते - is offered

Bhakti towards God's manifest form alone is the greatest form of devotion and it alone is said to bear all fruits. Therefore, such bhakti is offered to the guru-hari,⁶² who is the form of Nārāyaṇa. (160)

⁶² Swaminarayan uses the term 'guru-hari' to describe the Akṣarabrahman guru, through whom God manifests, in Vacanamṛta GA-2 (Swaminarayan 545-57). The use of this term to describe the guru explicitly states the principle being described in this verse – namely, that the guru embodies God and is thus God's manifest form.

8.9 Spiritual Endeavour

The author summarises the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's key spiritual practices over the next two verses and proclaims that one can perfect these practices through association with the Akṣarabrahman guru. The two verses thereafter summarise the words used in the Vacanāmṛta to describe the importance of the Akṣarabrahman guru in order to master the endeavours mentioned here.

इन्द्रियसंयमो मायाविकारादिविदारणम् ।

एकान्तधर्मपुष्टिश्च स्वात्मनि ब्रह्मरूपता ॥ १६१ ॥

indriyasamyamo māyāvikārādividāraṇam,
ekāntadharmapuṣṭiśca svātmani brahmarūpatā.

पदच्छेदः - इन्द्रियसंयमः, मायाविकारादिविदारणम्, एकान्तधर्मपुष्टिः, च, स्वात्मनि,
ब्रह्मरूपता ॥

अन्वयः

इन्द्रियसंयमः - self-control

स्वात्मनि - in one's ātman

मायाविकारादिविदारणम् - the
eradication of māyic flaws

ब्रह्मरूपता - the brahmarūpa
state

एकान्तधर्मपुष्टिः - the nour-
ishment of ekāntika
dharma.

Control over the senses, the eradication of flaws arising from māyā, the nourishment of ekāntika dharma, and the realisation of one's ātman as brahmarūpa, (161)

माहात्म्यसहितः सम्यङ्निश्चयः परमात्मनः ।

मोक्षः सर्वार्थसिद्धिर्हि प्रत्यक्षब्रह्मसङ्गतः ॥ १६२ ॥

māhātmyasahitaḥ samyānniścayaḥ paramātmanah,
mokṣaḥ sarvārthasiddhirhi pratyakṣabrahmasaṅgataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - माहात्म्यसहितः, सम्यक्, निश्चयः, परमात्मनः, मोक्षः, सर्वार्थसिद्धिः,
हि, प्रत्यक्षब्रह्मसङ्गतः ॥

अन्वयः

माहात्म्यसहितः - with knowl-
edge of [Paramātman's]
glory

परमात्मनः - Paramātman's

सम्यक् - complete

निश्चयः - conviction

मोक्षः - liberation

सर्वार्थसिद्धिः च - and the
achievement of all else
that is to be achieved

हि (प्राप्यते) - is certainly
attained

प्रत्यक्षब्रह्मसङ्गतः - through
the association of the
Akṣarabrahman guru

Liberation, complete conviction in God that is characterised by the knowledge of God's glory, and all else that is to be achieved is attained through association with the manifest, Akṣarabrahman guru. (162)

परमैकान्तिको भक्तः साधुः सत्पुरुषश्च सन्।
 एकान्तिको गुरुः साक्षाद् महापुरुष आदिभिः ॥ १६३ ॥
 एकमेवाक्षरं ब्रह्म मोक्षोपायतया ध्रुवम्।
 वचनामृतवाक्येषु नानाशब्दैः प्रदर्शितम् ॥ १६४ ॥

paramaikāntiko bhaktaḥ sādhuḥ satpuruṣaśca san,
 ekāntiko guruḥ śakṣād mahāpuruṣa ādibhiḥ.
 ekamevākṣaram brahma mokṣopāyatayā dhruvam,
 vacanāmṛtavākyeṣu nānāśabdaiḥ pradarśitam.

पदच्छेदः - परमैकान्तिकः, भक्तः, साधुः, सत्पुरुषः, च, सन्, एकान्तिकः, गुरुः,
 साक्षात्, महापुरुषः, आदिभिः, एकम्, एव, अक्षरम्, ब्रह्म, मोक्षोपायतया, ध्रुवम्,
 वचनामृतवाक्येषु, नानाशब्दैः, प्रदर्शितम् ॥

अन्वयः

वचनामृतवाक्येषु - in the Va-	गुरुः - guru
canāmṛta's teachings	साक्षात् - manifest
एकम् एव - the one and only	महापुरुषः - mahāpuruṣa
अक्षरं ब्रह्म - Akṣarabrahman	च - and
परमैकान्तिकः - param ekān-	आदिभिः नानाशब्दैः - through
tika	these and other terms
भक्तः - bhakta	मोक्षोपायतया - as the key to
साधुः - sādhu	liberation
सत्पुरुषः - satpuruṣa	ध्रुवम् - invariably
सन् - sant	प्रदर्शितम् - has been shown
एकान्तिकः - ekāntika	

In the Vacanāmṛta, the one and only Akṣarabrahman is referred to as the param ekāntika bhakta, sādhu, satpuruṣa, sant, ekāntika, guru, and the manifest mahāpuruṣa. Through these and other such terms, Akṣarabrahman invariably has been shown as the key to liberation. (163-4)

The author concludes with three verses that enumerate specific spiritual endeavours, foremost of which is attaining oneness with Akṣarabrahman.

उत्साहोऽभ्यसनं धैर्यं विश्वासः संयमो बलम् ।

सुहृद्भावस्तथैक्यं च दासत्वं गुरुसेवनम् ॥ १६५ ॥

utsāho'bhyasanam dhairyaṁ viśvāsaḥ saṁyamo balam,
suhṛddbhāvastathaikyam ca dāsatvaṁ gurusevanam.

पदच्छेदः - उत्साहः, अभ्यसनम्, धैर्यम्, विश्वासः, संयमः, बलम्, सुहृद्भावः,
तथा, ऐक्यम्, च, दासत्वम्, गुरुसेवनम् ॥

अन्वयः

उत्साहः - enthusiasm

बलम् - strength

अभ्यसनम् - repeated practice [of spiritual endeavours]

सुहृद्भावः - fraternity

ऐक्यम् - unity

धैर्यम् - forbearance

दासत्वम् - humility

विश्वासः - faith

तथा च - and

संयमः - self-control

गुरुसेवनम् - service towards the Akṣarabrahman guru

Enthusiasm, repeated practice of spiritual endeavours, forbearance, faith, self-control, strength, fraternity, unity, humility, and service towards the Akṣarabrahman guru; (165)

प्रार्थना च मुमुक्षा च सहश्च गुणग्राहिता ।

प्राप्त्यादिकाऽनुसन्धानमन्तर्दृष्टिस्तथाऽऽहिनकम् ॥ १६६ ॥

prārthanā ca mumukṣā ca sahaśca guṇagrāhitā,
prāptyādikā'nusandhānamantardṛṣṭis-tatha'āhnikam.

पदच्छेदः - प्रार्थना, च, मुमुक्षा, च, सहः, च, गुणग्राहिता, प्राप्त्यादिकाऽनुसन्धानम्,
अन्तर्दृष्टिः, तथा, आहिनकम् ॥

अन्वयः

प्रार्थना - prayer

च - and

मुमुक्षा - a desire for liberation

सहः - tolerance

गुणग्राहिता - appreciation of the good in others

प्राप्त्यादिकाऽनुसन्धानम् -

awareness of such concepts as the significance and glory of that which we have attained [in the form of satsaṅga]

अन्तर्दृष्टिः - introspection

तथा च - as well as

आहिनकम् च - and daily offerings of bhakti

Prayer, a desire for liberation, tolerance, appreciation of the good in others, awareness of such concepts as the significance and glory of satsaṅga, introspection, and daily offerings of bhakti; (166)

एतानि साधनानि स्युर्गुरुप्रसन्नता यतः ।

साक्षाद् ब्रह्मप्रसङ्गस्तु तेष्वपि प्रमुखं भवेत् ॥ १६७ ॥

etāni sādhanāni syurguruprasannatā yataḥ,
sākṣād brahmaprasaṅgastu teṣvapi pramukhaṁ bhavet.

पदच्छेदः - एतानि, साधनानि, स्युः, गुरुप्रसन्नता, यतः, साक्षात्, ब्रह्मप्रसङ्गः, तु,
तेषु, अपि, प्रमुखम्, भवेत् ॥

अन्वयः

एतानि - these	अपि - indeed
साधनानि - spiritual endeavours	साक्षाद् - itself
स्युः - are	ब्रह्मप्रसङ्गः - association with the Akṣarabrahman
यतः - through which	गुरु
गुरुप्रसन्नता - the guru's grace	तु - truly
(प्राप्यते) - is earned	प्रमुखम् - foremost
तेषु (साधनेषु) - amongst these endeavours	(साधनम्) - endeavour
	भवेत् - is

These are spiritual endeavours through which one earns the guru's grace. However, amongst all of these, association with the Akṣarabrahman guru is truly the foremost endeavour. (167)

एवं परब्रह्मस्वामिनारायणप्रबोधित-ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुणातीतगुरुपरम्परोपबृंहित-
 ब्रह्मविद्यालक्षणाऽक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनप्रतिपादके
 साधुभद्रेशदासविरचिते
 स्वामिनारायणसिद्धान्तसुधाऽऽख्ये शास्त्रेऽस्मिन्
 समाप्तं साधनधारा
 नामऽष्टमं प्रकरणम् ॥

In this way ends the eighth chapter, known as the ‘Sādha-
 na-dhārā’, of Sadhu Bhadreshdas’ *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sud-
 hā*, a text that substantiates the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana,
 which is characterised as brahmavidyā, was taught by Parabrah-
 man Swaminarayan, and has been fostered by the lineage of
 brahmasvarūpa, guṇātīta gurus.

Chapter 9

Phala-dhārā

9.1 Introduction

The *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*'s final chapter discusses liberation, the ultimate fruit of spiritual endeavour. The author defines liberation as a state in which one has attained oneness with Akṣarabrahman and offers bhakti to Parabrahman. He further explains two types of liberation, or mukti – jivan-mukti and videha-mukti. Jivan-mukti is spiritual perfection that is achieved while one is still living, while videha-mukti is the state a liberated being experiences after death.

This chapter explains videha-mukti at length, describing the process by which one becomes a videha-mukta and the benefits that the videha-mukta enjoys. Specifically, it says that Akṣara and Puruṣottama take the released being to Akṣaradhāman, Paramātman's divine abode, after the death of the physical body. In the state of videha-mukti, the released being receives a new body, known as a brāhmī tanu, and enjoys eternal bliss.

The author concludes his work by contextualising it in terms of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana at large. He recounts the darsanas five primary sources of knowledge – the Vacanāmṛta, the Svāmīnī Vāto, the texts recounting the lives of the Akṣarabrahman gurus, Pramukh Swami Maharaj's 'Siddhān-

ta-patram', and direct association with the manifest, brahmasvarūpa guru. He also praises the countless people that live the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, describing their imbibing of the tradition as being far above mere scriptural enquiry. He ends by again praising association with the brahmasvarūpa guru and praying that he may be forever blessed with such association.

9.2 Benediction

यत्कारुण्यकणस्पर्शान्मुक्तिः करतलायते ।

नारायणस्वरूपाय नमोऽस्तु भद्रकाङ्क्षया ॥ १६८ ॥

yatkāruṇyakaṇasparśānmuktiḥ karatalāyate,
nārāyaṇasvarūpāya namo'stu bhadrakāṅkṣayā.

पदच्छेदः - यत्कारुण्यकणस्पर्शात्, मुक्तिः, करतलायते, नारायणस्वरूपाय,
नमोऽस्तु भद्रकाङ्क्षया ॥

अन्वयः

मुक्तिः - liberation

भद्रकाङ्क्षया - with auspicious thoughts

यत्कारुण्यकणस्पर्शात् - by the touch of even of a grain of whose compassion

नारायणस्वरूपाय - to Narayanswaroop

करतलायते - is made to rest in the palm of one's hand

नमः - homage

अस्तु - may there be

With auspicious intentions, I offer homage to Narayanswaroop. Indeed, by the touch of even a grain of his compassion, liberation is easily attained, as if it rests in the palm of one's hand. (168)

9.3 Defining Liberation

मुक्तिर्हि स्वात्मब्रह्मैक्यपूर्वकं दासभावतः ।
भजनोपासनं प्रीत्या स्वामिनारायणप्रभोः ॥ १६९ ॥

muktirhi svātmabrahmaikya-pūrvakaṁ dāsabhāvataḥ,
bhajanopāśanaṁ prītyā svāminārāyaṇaprabhoḥ.

पदच्छेदः - मुक्तिः, हि, स्वात्मब्रह्मैक्यपूर्वकम्, दासभावतः, भजनोपासनम्, प्रीत्या,
स्वामिनारायणप्रभोः ॥

अन्वयः

स्वात्मब्रह्मैक्यपूर्वकम् - charac-	प्रीत्या - with love
terised by the qualitative	भजनोपासनम् - worship
oneness of one's ātman	हि - indeed
with Akṣarabrahman	मुक्तिः - mukti (liberation)
स्वामिनारायणप्रभोः - Bhagwan	(कथ्यते) - is called
Swaminarayan's	
दासभावतः - with humility	

Mukti (liberation) is humbly and lovingly worshipping Bhagwan Swaminarayan upon having attained qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman. (169)

सा पुनर्द्विविधा प्रोक्ता ब्रह्मस्थितिमतां ध्रुवा ।

एका जीवत एव स्याद् अन्या च मरणादनु ॥ १७० ॥

sā punardvividhā proktā brahmasthitimatāṃ dhruvā,
ekā jīvata eva syād anyā ca maraṇādanu.

पदच्छेदः - सा, पुनर्, द्विविधा, प्रोक्ता, ब्रह्मस्थितिमताम्, ध्रुवा, एका, जीवतः, एव,
स्यात्, अन्या, च, मरणात्, अनु ॥

अन्वयः

ब्रह्मस्थितिमताम् - of those
who have attained one-
ness with Akṣarabrahman

सा - it

ध्रुवा - everlasting

(मुक्तिः) - mukti

पुनः - again

द्विविधा - of two types

प्रोक्ता - said to be

एका - one

जीवत एव - while still living

स्यात् - occurs

अन्या - the other

च - and

मरणादनु - after death

(स्यात्) - occurs

Moreover, this everlasting mukti for those who have attained oneness with Akṣarabrahman is said to be of two types: one that occurs while living and the other after death. (170)

The author explains the concept of the nityamukta, or the eternally liberated being, according to the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana:

द्वावेव नित्यमुक्तौ स्तो ह्यक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ ।
ताभ्यां भिन्नेषु सर्वेषु नाऽनादिमुक्तता मता ॥ १७१ ॥

dvāveva nityamuktau sto hyakṣarapuruṣottamau,
tābhyāṃ bhinneṣu sarveṣu nā'nādimuktatā matā.

पदच्छेदः - द्वौ, एव, नित्यमुक्तौ, स्तः, हि, अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ, ताभ्याम्, भिन्नेषु, सर्वेषु, न, अनादिमुक्तता, मता ॥

अन्वयः

अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ - Akṣara and
Puruṣottama
हि - indeed
द्वौ - two
एव - only
नित्यमुक्तौ - eternally liberated beings

स्तः - are
ताभ्यां भिन्नेषु सर्वेषु - in all
other than these two
अनादिमुक्तता - the state of
being eternally liberated
न मता - is not recognised

Akṣara and Puruṣottama are the only two eternally liberated beings. No entity apart from these is recognised to be eternally liberated. (171)

9.4 Videha-mukti

देहपातोत्तरं लभ्या विदेहमुक्तिरुच्यते।

अक्षरधाम्नि भोग्येयं मूर्तिमद्ब्रह्मणा सह ॥ १७२ ॥

dehapātottaraṃ labhyā videhamuktirucyate,
akṣaradhāmani bhogyeyaṃ mūrtimadbrahmaṇā saha.

पदच्छेदः - देहपातोत्तरम्, लभ्या, विदेहमुक्तिः, उच्यते, अक्षरधाम्नि, भोग्या, इयम्,
मूर्तिमद्ब्रह्मणा, सह ॥

अन्वयः

देहपातोत्तरम् - after shedding
the mortal body

अक्षरधाम्नि - in
Akṣaradhāman

(या) लभ्या - that which is
attained

मूर्तिमद्ब्रह्मणा सह - with
Akṣarabrahman, which

(सा) विदेहमुक्तिः उच्यते - this
is known as videha-mukti

appears in a personal
form

इयम् - this

भोग्या - is experienced

The liberation attained after shedding the mortal body is known as videha-mukti. The released being experiences the bliss of such liberation in Akṣaradhāman along with the personal form of Akṣarabrahman.⁶³ (172)

63 Taittirīyopaniṣad 2.1.1; Bhadrēśhas, *Upaniṣat-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam*, Vol.1, 361.

प्राप्य नवां तनुं ब्राह्मीं परात्माऽऽकारसंनिभाम् ।
नित्यद्विभुजपादादि-दिव्यकरणसंयुताम् ॥ १७३ ॥

prāpya navāṃ tanuṃ brāhmīṃ parātmā'ākārasaṁnibhām,
nitya-dvibhuja-pādādi-divyakaraṇa-saṁyutām.

पदच्छेदः - प्राप्य, नवाम्, तनुम्, ब्राह्मीम्, परात्माऽऽकारसंनिभाम्, नित्यद्विभुजपादादि-
दिव्यकरणसंयुताम् ॥

अन्वयः

(विदेहमुक्तौ) - in the state of
videha-mukti

(मुक्तः) - the released being
परात्माऽऽकारसंनिभाम् - that
which resembles the form
of Paramātmān

ब्राह्मीम् - that which is made
of the divine element
known as Akṣarabrahman

नित्यद्विभुजपादादिदिव्यकरण-
संयुताम् - that which eter-
nally possesses two arms,
feet, and other divine
instruments of action.

नवाम् - new

तनुम् - body

प्राप्य - having attained

(अक्षरधाम्नि) - in
Akṣaradhāman

(वसति) - resides

In the state of videha-mukti, the released being attains a new body that is made of the divine element known as Akṣarabrahman. This new body looks just like that of Paramātmān and eternally possesses two arms, feet, and other divine instruments of action.⁶⁴ (173)

⁶⁴ See verse 128.

सर्वे मुक्ताः समाऽऽकारा न्यूनाऽधिकत्ववर्जिताः ।

स्त्रीपुरुषत्वशून्याश्च क्षुधादिरहितास्तथा ॥ १७४ ॥

sarve muktāḥ samā'ākāra nyūnā'dhikativavarjitāḥ,
strīpuruṣatvaśūnyāśca kṣudhādirahitāstathā.

पदच्छेदः - सर्वे, मुक्ताः, समाऽऽकाराः, न्यूनाऽधिकत्ववर्जिताः, स्त्रीपुरुषत्वशून्याः,
च, क्षुधादिरहिताः, तथा ॥

अन्वयः

(अक्षरधाम्नि) - in
Akṣaradhāman

सर्वे - all

मुक्ताः - released beings

समाऽऽकाराः - those who are
of similar form

न्यूनाऽधिकत्ववर्जिताः - those
who are free of relative
insignificance and signifi-
cance

स्त्रीपुरुषत्वशून्याः - free of
differences arising from
gender classification

तथा च - and

क्षुधादिरहिताः - free of hunger
and other such yearnings

(सन्ति) - are

All of the released beings in Akṣaradhāman possess the same form. There is no difference in their relative significance. They are above gender differences and free of hunger and other such yearnings. (174)

निमग्नाः सहजानन्दे प्रगाढाऽऽनन्दसेविताः ।

कुर्वाणा ब्रह्मभावाऽऽद्यां तद्भक्तिं दासभावतः ॥ १७५ ॥

nimagnāḥ sahajānande pragāḍhā'nandasevitāḥ,
kurvāṇā brahmabhāvā'ḍhyāṁ tadbhaktiṁ dāsabhāvataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - निमग्नाः, सहजानन्दे, प्रगाढाऽऽनन्दसेविताः, कुर्वाणाः,
ब्रह्मभावाऽऽद्याम्, तद्भक्तिम्, दासभावतः ॥

अन्वयः

(ते मुक्ताः) - those released
souls

सहजानन्दे - in Sahajanand

निमग्नाः - those who are
immersed

प्रगाढाऽऽनन्दसेविताः - those
who enjoy profound bliss

(सन्ति) - are

(तथा च) - and

दासभावतः - with humility

ब्रह्मभावाऽऽद्याम् - that
which is enriched by one-
ness with Akṣarabrahman

तद्भक्तिम् - his devotion

कुर्वाणाः - those who do

(वर्तन्ते) - are

Immersed in Swaminarayan's divine form, they enjoy profound bliss. They offer humble devotion to him that is enriched by their qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman. (175)

भक्तानां ब्रह्मरूपाणामक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ ।
 देहपातोत्तरं स्यातां प्रमुखावातिवाहिकौ ॥ १७६ ॥

bhaktānām brahmarūpāṇāmakṣarapuruṣottamau,
 dehapātottaram syātām pramukhāvātivāhikau.

पदच्छेदः - भक्तानाम्, ब्रह्मरूपाणाम्, अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ, देहपातोत्तरम्, स्याताम्,
 प्रमुखौ, आतिवाहिकौ ॥

अन्वयः

ब्रह्मरूपाणां भक्तानाम् - of devotees who have attained oneness with Akṣarabrahman	(अक्षरधाम्नः) - Akṣaradhāman's
देहपातोत्तरम् - after the death of [their mortal] bodies	प्रमुखौ - those who are foremost
अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमौ - Akṣara and Puruṣottama	आतिवाहिकौ - those who take
	स्याताम् - are

Akṣara and Puruṣottama are foremost in taking these brahmarūpa devotees to Akṣaradhāman after these devotees have shed their mortal bodies. (176)

ऐश्वर्यं सर्वमुक्तानां सर्वज्ञत्वादिलक्षणम् ।

परप्रसादतो लभ्यं जगद्व्यापारवर्जितम् ॥ १७७ ॥

aiśvaryaṃ sarvamuktānāṃ sarvajñatvādīlakṣaṇam,
paraprasādato labhyaṃ jagadvyāpāraavarjitaṃ.

पदच्छेदः - ऐश्वर्यम्, सर्वमुक्तानाम्, सर्वज्ञत्वादिलक्षणम्, परप्रसादतः, लभ्यम्,
जगद्व्यापारवर्जितम् ॥

अन्वयः

परप्रसादतः - by Paramāt-
man's grace

सर्वमुक्तानाम् - of all liberat-
ed beings

जगद्व्यापारवर्जितम् - apart
from creation

सर्वज्ञत्वादिलक्षणम् (च) - and
characterised by omni-
science and other quali-
ties

ऐश्वर्यम् - divine faculties

लभ्यम् - attainable

By Paramātman's grace, all liberated beings attain omni-
science and other divine faculties. However, the virtues these
beings attain do not include the power to engender creation.⁶⁵
(177)

⁶⁵In the classic style of Indian philosophical debate, Bhadreshdas presents five śāstric references in the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* stating the prima facie view that the released being, indeed, attains the ability engender creation. He defeats this view, however, with an array of passages that show that only Parabrahman initiates creation (p.410-II). He adds in the *Brahmasūtra-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣya*'s 'jagadvyāpāra adhikaraṇa' (p.427-33) that released souls also cannot liberate others or serve as the divine abode, as these faculties are reserved for Akṣara and Puruṣottama.

पुनरावर्तनं नैव लब्धमुक्तेः कदाचन।

ब्रह्मरूपस्य भक्तस्य परानन्दे निमज्जनम् ॥ १७८ ॥

punarāvartanaṃ naiva labdhamukteḥ kadācana,
brahmarūpasya bhaktasya parānande nimajjanam.

पदच्छेदः - पुनरावर्तनम्, न, एव, लब्धमुक्तेः, कदाचन, ब्रह्मरूपस्य, भक्तस्य,
परानन्दे, निमज्जनम् ॥

अन्वयः

लब्धमुक्तेः - of one who has
attained liberation

(भवति) - occur

कदाचन - at any time

ब्रह्मरूपस्य भक्तस्य - the brah-
marūpa devotee

पुनरावर्तनम् - return [to the
cycle of transmigration]

परानन्दे - in Paramātman's
bliss

न - does not

निमज्जनम् - immersion

एव - certainly

One who has attained liberation never returns to the cycle of transmigration. This brahmarūpa devotee remains immersed in Paramātman's bliss. (178)

9.5 The Significance of these Verses

The author concludes by sharing the purpose of enunciating the essence of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama philosophy through the present verses.

सिद्धान्तसंग्रहेणैवं कारिका रचिता इमाः ।

अभ्यासे मनने पाठे वादे महोपकारिकाः ॥ १७९ ॥

siddhāntasaṅgrahaṇaivam kārīkā racitā imāḥ,
abhyāse manane pāṭhe vāde mahopakārikāḥ.

पदच्छेदः - सिद्धान्तसंग्रहेण, एवम्, कारिकाः, रचिताः, इमाः, अभ्यासे, मनने, पाठे, वादे, महोपकारिकाः ॥

अन्वयः

इमाः - these

अभ्यासे - in study

कारिकाः - verses

मनने - in reflection

सिद्धान्तसंग्रहेण - to summarise the [Akṣara-Puruṣottama] principle.

पाठे - in recitation

वादे (च) - and in philosophical discussion

एवम् - in this way

महोपकारिकाः - very useful

रचिताः - created

(सन्ति) - are

(इमाः कारिकाः) - these

verses

These verses have been created to summarise the Akṣara-Puruṣottama principle. Indeed, these verses facilitate study, reflection, recitation, and philosophical discussion on this doctrine.

एवं परब्रह्मस्वामिनारायणप्रबोधित-ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुणातीतगुरुपरम्परोपबृंहित-
 ब्रह्मविद्यालक्षणाऽक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनप्रतिपादके
 साधुभट्टेशदासविरचिते
 स्वामिनारायणसिद्धान्तसुधाऽऽख्ये शास्त्रेऽस्मिन्
 समाप्तं फलधारा नाम
 नवमं प्रकरणम् ॥

In this way ends the ninth chapter, known as the 'Pha-
 la-dhārā', of Sadhu Bhadresha's *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sud-
 hā*, a text that substantiates the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana,
 which is characterised as brahmavidyā, was taught by Parabrah-
 man Swaminarayan, and has been fostered by the lineage of
 brahmasvarūpa, guṇātīta gurus.

Concluding Verses & Benediction

The author presents the five nectar-like sources that elaborate upon the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

स्वामिवार्ताऽमृतं दिव्यं दिव्यं च वचनाऽमृतम् ।
 गुरुणां चरितं दिव्यं गुरुलेखाऽमृतं शुभम् ॥ १८० ॥
 गुरुलाभाऽमृतं साक्षाद् हरये गुरवे तथा ।
 पञ्चाऽमृताऽभिषिक्तोऽहं सुधाऽञ्जलिं समर्पये ॥ १८१ ॥

svāmivartā'mṛtaṁ divyaṁ divyaṁ ca vacanā'mṛtaṁ,
 gurūṇāṁ caritaṁ divyaṁ gurulekhā'mṛtaṁ śubham.

gurulabha'mṛtaṁ sākṣād haraye gurave tathā,
 pañcā'mṛtā'bhiṣikto'haṁ sudhā'ñjaliṁ samarpaye.

पदच्छेदः - स्वामिवार्ताऽमृतम्, दिव्यम्, दिव्यम्, च, वचनाऽमृतम्, गुरुणां,
 चरितम्, दिव्यम्, गुरुलेखाऽमृतम्, शुभम्, गुरुलाभाऽमृतम्, साक्षात्, हरये, गुरवे,
 तथा, पञ्चाऽमृताऽभिषिक्तः, अहम्, सुधाऽञ्जलिम्, समर्पये ॥

अन्वयः

(प्रथमम्) - the first

(तृतीयम्) - the third

दिव्यम् - the divine

गुरुणाम् - the Akṣarabrah-
 man gurus'

वचनमृतम् - Vacanāmṛta

दिव्यम् - divine

(द्वितीयम्) - the second

चरितम् - actions

दिव्यम् - the divine

(चतुर्थम्) - the fourth

स्वामिवार्ताऽमृतम् - nectar in

the form of the Svāmī

शुभम् - the auspicious

Vāto

गुरुलेखामृतम् - nectar in the form of the guru's letter	अहम् - I हरये - to Parabrahman
(पञ्चमम्) - the fifth	तथा - and
च - and	गुरवे - to the guru
साक्षाद् - direct	सुधाञ्जलिम् - salutations in the form of the [Svāminārāyaṇa Siddhān- ta] Sudhā
गुरुलाभामृतम् - nectar in the form of association with the [living] guru	समर्पये - I offer
(एवम्) - in this way	
पञ्चामृताऽभिषिक्तः - anointed by the five nectars	

The first divine nectar is the Vacanāmṛta. The second is the Svāmīnī Vāto. The texts recounting the lives of the Akṣarabrahman gurus are the third. The guru's auspicious letter is the fourth.⁶⁶ The fifth is direct association with the living guru. Anointed by these five nectars, I offer my salutations in the form of the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* to Parabrahman Swaminarayan and my guru. (180-81)

⁶⁶The guru's letter signifies the 'Siddhānta-patram', a philosophical document written by Pramukh Swami Maharaj (see front matter).

The author ends the text with praises of the guru and the satsaṅga fellowship and, lastly, a prayer.

शब्देषु साधितं यद्धि सप्रपञ्चं निरूपितम्।

नैके तदद्य जीवन्ति गुरुसत्सङ्गवैभवात् ॥ १८२ ॥

śabdeṣu sādhitam yaddhi saprapañcam nirūpitam,
naike tadadya jīvanti gurusatsaṅgavaibhavāt.

पदच्छेदः - शब्देषु, साधितम्, यद्, हि, सप्रपञ्चम्, निरूपितम्, नैके, तत्, अद्य, जीवन्ति, गुरुसत्सङ्गवैभवात् ॥

अन्वयः

(अस्मिन् ग्रन्थे) - in this text

यत् - that which

हि - certainly

शब्देषु - in words

साधितम् - has been established

(यत्) - that which

(च) - and

सप्रपञ्चम् - at length

निरूपितम् - has been explained

तत् - that

अद्य - today

गुरुसत्सङ्गवैभवात् - due to the power of association with the Akṣarabrahman guru

नैके - countless

जीवन्ति - live

The principles that have been substantiated and explained at length through words here are lived by countless devotees today due to the power of association with the Akṣarabrahman guru. (182) CC-0. Kavikulguru Kalidas Sanskrit University Ramtek Collection

सन्तुष्टा दृढनिष्ठातो ह्यक्षरपुरुषोत्तमे ।
सत्सङ्गे बहवो दृष्टाः शास्त्रक्लेशविवर्जिताः ॥ १८३ ॥

santuṣṭā dṛḍhaniṣṭhāto hyakṣarapuruṣottame,
satsaṅge bahavo dṛṣṭāḥ śāstrakleśavivarjitāḥ.

पदच्छेदः - सन्तुष्टाः, दृढनिष्ठातः, हि, अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमे, सत्सङ्गे, बहवः, दृष्टाः,
शास्त्रक्लेशविवर्जिताः ॥

अन्वयः

अक्षरपुरुषोत्तमे - in	शास्त्रक्लेशविवर्जिताः - without
Akṣara-Puruṣottama	having gone through the
हि - indeed	pains of scriptural study
दृढनिष्ठातः - due to firm	बहवः - many
conviction	(भक्ताः) - devotees
सन्तुष्टाः - fulfilled	सत्सङ्गे - in the fellowship
	दृष्टाः - can be seen

In the fellowship today, many devotees can be seen who are fulfilled due to their firm conviction in Akṣara-Puruṣottama. These devotees experience this state without having gone through the pains of scriptural study. (183)

सत्सङ्गान्नाधिकं किञ्चिद् गुरुप्रसङ्गलक्षणात् ।

एतादृग्ग्रन्थकोटिभ्यः सत्सङ्ग उत्तमस्ततः ॥ १८४ ॥

satsaṅgānnādhikaṃ kiñcid guruprasaṅgalakṣaṇāt,
etādṛggranthakoṭibhyaḥ satsaṅga uttamastataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - सत्सङ्गात्, न, अधिकम्, किञ्चित्, गुरुप्रसङ्गलक्षणात्,
एतादृग्ग्रन्थकोटिभ्यः, सत्सङ्गः, उत्तमः, ततः ॥

अन्वयः

गुरुप्रसङ्गलक्षणात् सत्सङ्गाद्
- than satsaṅga that is
characterised by associa-
tion with the Akṣarabrah-
man guru

अधिकम् - greater

किञ्चिद् - anything

नास्ति - is not

ततः - therefore

एतादृग्ग्रन्थकोटिभ्यः - than
tens of millions of such
texts

सत्सङ्गः - satsaṅga

उत्तमः - is greater

Nothing is superior to satsaṅga that is characterised by association with the Akṣarabrahman guru. Indeed, satsaṅga in this form is even greater than tens of millions of such texts.
(184)

श्वासे श्वासे च सत्सङ्गं दिव्यमलौकिकं शुभम्।

पूरयेति गुरो याचे ग्रन्थाऽन्ते भद्रभावतः ॥ १८५ ॥

śvāse śvāse ca satsaṅgaṁ divyamalaukikaṁ śubham,
pūrayeti guro yāce granthānte bhadrabhāvataḥ.

पदच्छेदः - श्वासे, श्वासे, च, सत्सङ्गम्, दिव्यम्, अलौकिकम्, शुभम्, पूरय, इति,
गुरो, याचे, ग्रन्थाऽन्ते, भद्रभावतः ॥

अन्वयः

(हे) गुरो! - O Dear Guru!

सत्सङ्गम् - association

(मम) - of mine

पूरय - fill

श्वासे श्वासे - in every breath

इति - the aforementioned

दिव्यम् - divine

ग्रन्थाऽन्ते - at the closing of

अलौकिकम् - extraordinary

this text

शुभम् - blessed

भद्रभावतः - auspiciously

च - and

(अहम्) - I

याचे - ask

O Dear Guru! At the closing of this text, I auspiciously request you to enrich my every breath with your divine, extraordinary, and blessed association. (185)

एवं परब्रह्मस्वामिनारायणप्रबोधित-ब्रह्मस्वरूपगुणातीतगुरुपरम्परोपबृंहित-
 ब्रह्मविद्यालक्षणाऽक्षरपुरुषोत्तमदर्शनसंग्राहिकाः
 साधुभद्रेशदासविरचिताः
 स्वामिनारायणसिद्धान्तकारिकाः समाप्ताः ॥

In this way ends the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-kārikās* composed by Sadhu Bhadreshdas, which entail the essence of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana, which is characterised as brah-mavidyā, was taught by Parabrahman Swaminarayan, and has been fostered by the lineage of brahmasvarūpa, guṇātīta gurus.

Appendix

About Mahāmahopādya Bhadreshdas Swami (Author of the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*)

Bhadreshdas Swami is a renowned Sanskrit scholar born on 12 December 1966, in Maharashtra, India. A disciple of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, he took sannyāsa dikṣā from his spiritual guru, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, in 1981. He has received multiple masters (ācārya) degrees in Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, and the Pūrvamīmāṃsā Darśana. In 2005, he was awarded his doctoral degree for his work on *Paramātmapratyakṣasvarūpayogaḥ*, a comparative analysis of Swaminarayan's Vacanāmṛta and the *Bhagavadgītā*. Thereafter, he was awarded a D.Litt. from Kavikul-guru Kalidas Sanskrit University (KKSU) in 2010 for his contributions to Sanskrit literature, followed by the Mahāmahopādya award in 2012 and the Darśanakesarī award in October 2013 from the Akhila Bhāratiya Vidvat Pariṣad.

His magnum opuses are: 1) the *Prasthānatrayī-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam*, a comprehensive commentary on the ten principle Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the *Brahmasūtras*, according to teachings of Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa, and 2) the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*, a didactic treatise that offers a systematic and comprehensive exposition, justification, and defence of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's theological and philosophical principles.

Bhadreshdas Swami was a member of the project committee of the Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan, Ujjain, an institute governed by India's Ministry of Human Resource Development. He is currently head the BAPS Swaminarayan Research Institute in Delhi, a professor at AARSH (the Akshardham Center for Applied Research in Social Harmony), and a senior advisor for the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, which is in association with Somnath Sanskrit University,

Veraval, Gujarat.

His current projects include surveying Indological research throughout the world. He has visited more than 81 universities in 18 countries and has engaged in conversation regarding current research in Sanskrit linguistics and history, Indian philosophy and epistemology, Vedic literature, the Prasthānatrayī, comparative studies of religion, and the philosophy of religion.

Index of Verses

The *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā* consists of a total of 548 verses. Of these, 458 have been earmarked as *kārikās*, or verses that summarise the text's core teachings and are explained at length in the *Siddhanta-sudhā*'s prose. The index included below is an alphabetical listing of the first line of each verse that appears in the present work, the *Akṣara-puruṣottama-darśana-kārikā-saṅcaya*. Every entry is accompanied by its verse number as it appears in this book (indicated by Sa.No.), the corresponding *kārikā* number from the *Siddhanta-sudhā* (indicated by Kā.No.), and page number as it appears in this work (indicated by Pg.). This tool is intended to 1) help students of the *Siddhanta-sudhā* locate the translations and other tools offered in this book and 2) assist this book's readers in accessing the *Siddhanta-sudhā*'s detailed explanations and contextualisation of each verse.

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Glossary

Abhidhyānam – Worshipful salutation or obeisance.

Acitkhyati – Erroneous knowledge that has as its object that which undergoes quintuplication or satkāryatā.

Ahantva – Ego, or the quality of 'I-ness', that is caused by māyā.

Aiśvarya – Enhanced faculties that often facilitate governance.

Ājñā – Obedience to divine ordinances.

Akṣara – See entry under 'Akṣarabrahman'.

Akṣarabrahman – A sentient being that Parabrahman employs through such processes as genesis, sustenance, and liberation. It is also known as 'Akṣara' and 'Brahman'. It is a singular entity, yet it takes on four forms to fulfil its various service roles: 1) the cidākāśa, which pervades and sustains creation; 2) the divine abode, which houses Parabrahman and the released jīvas and īśvaras; 3) the servant within the divine abode, which acts as an ideal for released jīvas and īśvaras; and 4) the guru, who comes to earth and acts as a vessel through which Parabrahman can manifest and help people secure liberation.

Akṣaradhāman – Parabrahman's divine abode.

Akṣaramukta – A released soul that is of the jīva or īśvara category.

Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana – The system of philosophical teachings propounded by Parabrahman Swaminarayan and later coined by Brahmasvarūpa Shastriji Maharaj.

Akṣararūpa – See entry under the term 'brahmarūpa'.

Alaukika – That which is not worldly or corporeal.

Andhakāra – Darkness; also used to describe māyā.

Antahkāraṇa – The inner faculties.

Antaryāmin – That which is eternally present within all and governs all.

Anumāna – Inference.

Anupalabdhi – Non-cognition.

Arcimārga – The path that a jīva or īśvara takes on its way to Parabrahman's divine abode.

Anvaya – When used to describe a metaphysical entity, it indicates the entity's pervasiveness. In pedagogy, it refers to a didactic tool that helps in the interpretation of a Saṃskṛta verse. Placing a verse in anvaya order involves rearranging its component parts in grammatical sequence.

Arthāpatti – Postulation.

Aśnoti – A Saṃskṛta verb that denotes pervasiveness.

Āśrama – A common term used to describe the four stages of life, namely, brahmacarya, gr̥hastha, vānaprastha, and saṇnyāsa.

Ātman – The individual soul or self.

Avatāra – An incarnation of God.

Ātmarūpa – See entry under 'brahmarūpa'.

Avatārin – The cause of the incarnations; Parabrahman.

Avyākṛta – One of the īśvara's three bodies.

Bhadreshdas Swami (Bhadreśadāsa Svāmī) – Author of the *Prasthānatrayī-svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam* and the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*.

Bhagatji Maharaj (Bhagataji Mahārāja) – Swaminarayan's second spiritual successor, who lived from 1829 to 1897 CE.

Bhagavadgītā – A text of 700 verses that encapsulates a philosophical discussion between Krishna and Arjuna on the brink of the Mahābhārata war. This text forms the smṛti prasthāna (the retrospective component) of the Prasthānatrayī or the texts that comprise the Vedāntic canon.

Bhagavān – One who possesses divine faculties; most often used to refer to the Almighty.

Bhāgavata dharma – See entry under ‘ekāntika dharma’.

Bhogāvātī River – A body of water that runs through western and northern Gujarat; it is known colloquially as the Bhogāvo River.

Bochasan – A town in present-day central Gujarat that serves as home to the first traditional, stone mandira dedicated entirely to the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. This mandira, consecrated in 1907, was the first of five such edifices built by Brahmasvarūpa Shastriji Maharaj.

Brahmabhāva – The state of having attained qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman; also known as brahmasthiti and brāhmī sthiti. One who has attained this state is known as being brahmarūpa.

Brahman – See entry under ‘Akṣarabrahman’.

Brahmarūpa – The state of having attained cognitive, qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman. Also referred to as ātmarūpa and svāmirūpa.

Brahmasūtras – A text of aphorisms created by Vyāsa as a concordance of the Upaniṣads. This text forms the tarka prasthāna (the logical component) of the Prasthānatrayī or the texts that comprise the Vedāntic canon.

Brahmasthiti – See entry under ‘brahmabhāva’.

Brahmavidyā – The knowledge of Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, or Akṣara and Puruṣottama, according to Muṇḍakopaniṣad 1.2.13.

Brāhmavigraha – A body that is made of the divine element known as Akṣarabrahman. Jīvas and īśvaras receive such a body upon attaining videha-mukti, or the liberation that occurs after death.

Brāhmaṇa – One of the four castes that made up traditional Indian society. Brāhmaṇas were generally charged with studying and teaching the scriptures and officiating sacred rites.

Brāhmī sthiti – See entry under ‘brahmabhāva’.

Brāhmī tanu – A body that is made of the divine element known as Akṣarabrahman. Jīvas and īśvaras receive such a body upon attaining videha-mukti, or the liberation that occurs after death.

Brahmasvarūpa guru – Another word for the Akṣarabrahman guru. This guru serves as a vessel for God through whom devotees may attain liberation and interact with the Divine while on earth.

Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad – One of the ten principal Upaniṣads.

Cetana – A sentient being, such as the jīvas and īśvaras.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad – One of the ten principal Upaniṣads.

Chapaiyā – A village in northern India that falls in the present-day state of Uttar Pradesh. Parabrahman Bhagwan Swaminarayan took birth in this village in 1781.

Cidākāśa – One of Akṣarabrahman’s four forms. The cidākāśa is the pervasive form that sustains creation and governs over all according to Parabrahman’s wish. It is also known as the daharākāśa.

Cidacitkhyati – Erroneous knowledge that has as its object that which is not subject to quintuplication or satkāryatā and that which is subject to quintuplication or satkāryatā.

Citkhyati – Erroneous knowledge that has as its object that which is not subject to quintuplication or satkāryatā.

Daharākāśa – See entry under ‘cidākāśa’.

Darśana – This term can refer to the act of seeing or to the instrument by which one can see or know. When used as part of the term the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana or in reference to it, the term refers to a particular system of beliefs and practices.

Dārśanika – That which is related to any darśana or system of philosophical beliefs.

Dāsabhāva – The disposition of a servant.

Dhārā – A term used to describe a river or stream. The *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā's* chapters are analogously known as dhārās. Through this analogy, the text at large is depicted as an ocean of ambrosia that makes itself available to people through a series of rivers.

Dharma – Righteous action; one of the four components of Ekāntika Dharma.

Divyabhāva – The understanding that all are divine.

Ekāntika – This term can be used to describe anyone who has attained spiritual realisation, but is also often used to refer specifically to the Akṣarabrahman guru.

Ekāntika dharma – A collective name for the four endeavours of dharma, jñāna, vairāgya, and bhakti; also referred to as bhāgavata dharma.

Gadhada – A town in present-day, western Gujarat in which Swaminarayan primarily resided during his 25 years of ministry in the state. Of the Vacanāmṛta's 262 discourses, 185 were held in this town.

Gārgī – A Vedic philosopher who challenges the sage Yagnavalkya about issues such as the nature of Akṣarabrahman at a debate organised by King Janaka, as described in the Bṛhadāranya-kopaniṣad.

Ghanshyam (Ghanaśyāma) – The childhood name of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Guṇa – 'Quality'. It often refers to māyā's three qualities (sattva, rajas, and tamas) either individually or aggregately.

Gunatitanand Swami (Guṇātītānanda Svāmī) – Bhagwan Swaminarayan's first spiritual successor, who lived from 1785 to 1867. Through his provocative ministry, he consolidated the understanding that Swaminarayan was the manifestation of Parabrahman.

Guṇātīta – One who transcends māyā's three qualities, or guṇas.

Guru – A spiritual guide and nurturer who is the manifestation of Akṣarabrahman and serves as a vessel through which God remains ever-present on earth.

Guru-hari – A moniker for the Akṣarabrahman guru. This term, used by Swaminarayan in the Vacanāmṛta, encompasses the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's teaching that the guru is a vessel for God, who is also known as Hari.

Iṣṭadeva – One's chosen deity.

Īśvara – A category that consists of sentient beings that enjoy divine faculties that are employed for carrying out various tasks related to the creation, sustenance, and destruction of the world. The īśvara is one of the five eternal metaphysical entities. Īśvaras are often referred to as īśvarātmans.

Itihāsa – A category of sacred texts that includes works that recount history. Examples of itihāsa works include the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata.

Jaḍacidātmaka – That which includes both the jaḍa, or unsentient, and cit, or sentient.

Jay Swaminarayan (Jaya Svāminārāyaṇa) – A salutation that is used by members of the Swaminarayan fellowship.

Jīva – The individual soul, which is also referred to as the jīvātman or the ātman. It is one of the five eternal metaphysical entities. Jīvas are individually finite, yet countless in number. They take birth to receive the fruit of their karmas and attain liberation.

Jivan-mukti – Liberation that is experienced while alive.

Jīvātman – See entry under 'jīva'.

Jñāna – Experiential knowledge.

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Jñānasvarūpa – That which is inherently sentient.

Jñānayajña – The cognitive practice of identifying oneself with

Akṣarabrahman and offering upāsanā to Parabrahman

Jñātā – That which is the knower.

Kamaṇḍalu – A water pot.

Kārikā – A Saṃskṛta verse that summarises the teachings of a text.

Karma – Action.

Khyāti – Although this term literally refers to knowledge, it is used in Indian epistemology to describe knowledge that is delusional.

Kīrtana – A devotional song or the singing of such a song.

Kṣarati – A Saṃskṛta verb that denotes the act of decay.

Laukika – That which is of this world or corporeal.

Mahant Swami Maharaj (Mahanta Svāmī Mahārāja) – Swaminarayan's sixth spiritual successor and the manifest, Akṣarabrahman guru. He was born in 1933 CE.

Mandira – A house of worship.

Mantra – A word, sentence, or sound that is recited for concentration and prayer.

Mahāpuruṣa – A moniker for the Akṣarabrahman guru.

Mālā – A rosary.

Mamatva – Possessiveness, or the quality of 'my-ness', that is caused by māyā.

Maṅgalācaraṇa – A benedictory verse that appears at the beginning of a treatise. Such verses can also appear in the middle and end of a treatise.

Māyā – The force that shrouds jīvas and īśvaras, preventing them from attaining liberation. Māyā is one of the five eternal metaphysical entities, yet it is the only one that is not sentient. It is formed by three guṇas, or qualities – sattva, rajas, and tamas – and constitutes the base substance from which the material world is created. It is dependent upon and con-

trolled by Parabrahman.

Māyika – That which is somehow related to or born of māyā.

Mukti – Ultimate liberation.

Mumukṣu – ‘One who desires liberation’; a spiritual seeker.

Mundakopanishad – One of the ten principal Upaniṣads.

Mūrtimān – That which possesses a definite form.

Nārāyaṇa – Often used as a moniker for Parabrahman; as part of the Swaminarayan mantra, it refers to the historical personality of Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Narayanswarupdas (Nārāyaṇasvarūpadāsa) – Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s name upon initiation.

Neelkanth (Nīlakaṇṭha) – A moniker for Bhagwan Swaminarayan, who was known by this name as a teenage yogī.

Nirdoṣa-buddhi – The understanding of something as being free of flaws arising from māyā.

Nirguṇa – A term used to describe that which is free of māyic qualities or that which is subtle.

Nirlobha – Abstinence from greed; a vow of absolute poverty. It is one of the five principal vows given to ascetics of the Swaminarayan fellowship.

Nirmāna – Humility. It is one of the five principal vows given to ascetics of the Swaminarayan fellowship.

Nirvikalpa – That which involves no doubts. It is often used in the term ‘uttama nirvikalpa niścaya’, which is the highest form of faith, or nirvikalpa samādhi (a state of realisation in which one exclusively experiences God’s bliss).

Niṣkāma – Celibacy. It is one of the five principal vows given to ascetics of the Swaminarayan fellowship.

Nissneha – Non-attachment. It is one of the five principal vows given to ascetics of the Swaminarayan fellowship.

Nissvāda – Detachment from the sense of taste. It is one of the five principal vows given to ascetics of the Swaminarayan fellowship.

Padaccheda – A didactic tool that helps in the interpretation of a Saṃskṛta verse. A verse's padaccheda involves eliminating elisions so that words appear in their original state.

Parabrahman – The greatest sentient being; also known as Puruṣottama and Paramātman.

Parama Ekāntika Bhakta – Another name for the Akṣarabrahman guru.

Paramātman – The greatest sentient being; also known as Puruṣottama and Parabrahman.

Parārtha – That which is for others. This term is often used to describe inference that is performed for the edification of someone other than oneself.

Pradhāna-puruṣa – An īśvara that is instrumental in the process of creation.

Prakṛti – See entry under 'māyā'.

Pramāṇa – A means of valid knowledge.

Pramukha – The administrative head of an organisation.

Pramukh Swami Maharaj – Swaminarayan's fifth spiritual successor, who lived from 1921 to 2016 CE. He consolidated the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana by inspiring: 1) Historic, scholarly works such as the *Svāminārāyaṇa-bhāṣyam* and *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*, and 2) Ornate, large-scale edifices such as Akshardham in Delhi and the Swaminarayan Mandirs in London, Houston, Chicago, and the birthplaces of his predecessors. Through such works, he facilitated, commemorated, and celebrated the practice of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

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Praśnopaniṣad – One of the ten principal Upaniṣads.

Prasthānatrayī – A collective name for the canon of texts that is comprised of the Upaniṣads, *Brahmasūtras*, and *Bhagavadgita*.

Pratyakṣa – That which is manifest. When discussing the means of obtaining valid knowledge, or the pramāṇas, pratyakṣa refers to perception.

Purāṇa – A category of sacred texts that encompasses the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Skanda Purāṇa, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and other works written by Vyāsa in order to transmit the knowledge of the Vedas to laypersons.

Puruṣa – A sentient being.

Puruṣottama – The greatest sentient being; also known as Parabrahman and Paramātman.

Rajas – One of māyā's three qualities, or guṇas.

Śabda – Verbal testimony; understood as the primary means for gaining knowledge of metaphysical beings and objects.

Sadguru – A senior monk.

Sādhana – Spiritual praxis.

Sādhu – A monk or ascetic.

Saguṇa – A term used to describe that which possessive redemptive qualities or is pervasive.

Sahajanand (Sahajānanda) – A moniker for Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Sākāra – A term used to describe that which possesses a distinct form.

Sampradāya – A religious fellowship.

Sampradāyika – That which relates to a particular religious fellowship.

Samsāra – "The world." This term is also often used to refer to the transmigratory cycle or the cycle of births and deaths.

Sansthā – A formally established organisation. It is often used

to refer to the Bochasanwasi Akṣara-Puruṣottama Swaminarayan Sanstha, which Brahmasvarūpa Shastriji Maharaj established to propagate the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

Sarangpur – A village in present-day western Gujarat that Swaminarayan often visited during his ministry. Eighteen of the Vacanāmṛta's 262 discourses were held in this village.

Śarīrin – That which inhabits something and acts as its controller.

Śāstra – A sacred text.

Satkāryatā – The principle that an effect in the form of a material object necessarily exists within its cause.

Satpuruṣa – Another name for the Akṣarabrahman guru.

Satsaṅga – Association with the Akṣarabrahman guru.

Sattva – One of māyā's three qualities, or guṇas.

Shastriji Maharaj (Śāstriji Mahārāja) – Bhagwan Swaminarayan's third spiritual successor; also known as Yagnapurushdas. He lived from 1865 to 1951 CE. During these years, he coined the term 'Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana', consecrated Akṣara-Puruṣottama mūrtis in five exquisite, stone mandiras, and established the Bochasanwasi Akṣara-Puruṣottama Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), an organisation meant to facilitate the propagation of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

Shri Hari (Śrī Hari) – A moniker for Bhagwan Swaminarayan.

Siddhānta – A philosophical principle.

Siddhānta-patram – A philosophical document written by Pramukh Swami Maharaj in 2008 encompassing Bhagwan Swaminarayan's Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

Śikṣā – One of the six Vedic aṅgas, or fields of inquiry that one must master before embarking on Vedic study.

Śravaṇa – 'Listening'. It is one of the principal types of bhakti and primarily encompasses listening to discourses.

Śruti – ‘That which is heard’. This term most often refers to the Vedas, which encompass the Upaniṣads. It is also used as a general term to refer to individual verses from these texts.

Sthitaprajña yogī – A practitioner of yoga who has attained complete stability of mind and is focused on worshipping Paramātmā.

Sudhā – Ambrosia. It is used at times as a concise way of referring to the *Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā*.

Śūdra – One of the four castes that made up traditional Indian society.

Sūtrātma – One of the īśvara’s three bodies.

Svabhāva – One’s inherent nature.

Svāmi – Often used as a respectful title for initiated monks in the Swaminarayan fellowship. As part of the Swaminarayan mantra, it refers to the historical personality of Akṣarabrahman Gunatitanand Swami.

Svāmīnī Vāto – A textual compilation of Akṣarabrahman Gunatitanand Swami’s discourses.

Svāmīrūpa – See entry under ‘brahmarūpa’.

Svāmi-sevakabhāva – The disposition that a servant holds towards their master.

Swaminarayan (Svāminārāyaṇa) – The manifest form of Parabrahman and the original teacher of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana. He lived from 1781 to 1830 CE and remains ever present on earth-through a lineage of Akṣarabrahman gurus. See introduction for more information.

Swaminarayan mantra (Svāminārāyaṇa mantra) – The mantra chanted by all followers of the Swaminarayan fellowship. In this mantra, ‘Svāmī’ refers to the Akṣarabrahman guru, and ‘Nārāyaṇa’ refers to Parabrahman. Embedded in the recitation of this mantra is the cognitive act of identifying with Akṣarabrahman and worshipping Parabrahman.

Svāminārāyaṇa-siddhānta-sudhā – A didactic, Saṃskṛta treatise written by Sadhu Bhadreshdas in 2017 that offers a systematic and comprehensive exposition, justification and defence of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana's theological and philosophical principles.

Svārtha – That which is done for oneself. This term is often used to describe a particular type of inference, namely, that which is performed for one's own knowledge.

Tamas – One of māyā's three qualities.

Upamāna – Analogy.

Upaniṣad – A category of texts that form part of the Vedas. Along with the Vedas in general, these texts are also known as the śrutis (that which is heard), as they were initially revealed to enlightened ṛṣis, who heard them and transmitted them to their disciples. These texts are also known as the Vedānta, as they represent the philosophical essence of the Vedas. For centuries, ten Upaniṣads particular have been understood to represent the śruti prasthāna (revelatory component) of the Prasthānatrayī or the texts that comprise the Vedāntic canon.

Upāsana – Faithful worship.

Uttama nirvikalpa niścaya – The highest form of conviction in God. It is described in Vacanāmṛta L-12 as the state of worshipping God upon having attained qualitative oneness with Akṣarabrahman.

Uttar Pradesh – A state in northern India.

Vacanāmṛta – A text that contains compiled discourses from Swaminarayan ministry. This work was composed in Swaminarayan's presence and contains Swaminarayan's original teachings of the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana.

Vada-grantha – A didactic, Saṃskṛta treatise that offers a systematic and comprehensive exposition, justification and defence of a school of thought's theological and philosophical principles.

Vadhvan - See entry under 'Vardhamana'.

Vairāgya – Detachment. It is one of the four endeavours that comprise ekāntika dharma.

Vandanā – Worshipful salutation or obeisance.

Varṇa – Caste.

Vardhamana – A village in present-day, western Gujarat that is commonly known as Vadhvan. This village served home to the first traditional mandira in which the mūrtis of Akṣara and Puruṣottama were enshrined.

Vartāl – See entry under 'Vruttalaya'.

Vāsanā – Desire.

Vasanta – The Indian spring season.

Vasanta-tilakā – A metre in Saṃskṛta verse.

Veda – Sacred texts that comprise the core of Indian religious literature. The Veda is divided into four parts: 1) the Ṛg Veda, 2) the Yajur Veda, 3) the Sāma Veda, and 4) the Atharva Veda. Each of these parts, in turn, has four sections: 1) the Saṃhitās, 2) the Brahmaṇas, 3) the Āraṇyakas, and 4) the Upaniṣads. The Vedas and its parts are all known as 'śruti' (that which is heard), as they were initially revealed to ṛṣis, who heard them and passed them on to their disciples.

Vedic – That which relates to the Vedas.

Videha-mukti – The form of liberation that occurs after death.

Virāt Puruṣa – The īśvara that presides over a brahmāṇḍa, or unit of creation. This entity is also known as Virāt.

Vruttalaya – A village in present-day, central Gujarat that Swaminarayan often visited during his ministry. Twenty of the Vacanāmṛta's 262 discourses were held in this village.

Vyatiṛeka – Distinct or separate. When used to describe Parabrahman, this term refers to the human form of God that resides in the divine abode.

Yagnapurushdas (Yajñapurushadāsa) – See entry under ‘Shastriji Maharaj’.

Yajña – A fire ritual in which offerings are made to God.

Yājñavalkya – A ṛṣi who answers Gārgī’s questions about Akṣarabrahman and other topics during King Janaka’s yajña, as described in the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad.

Yogiji Maharaj (Yogī Mahārāja) – Bhagwan Swaminarayan’s fourth spiritual successor. He lived from 1892 to 1971, during which he spread the Akṣara-Puruṣottama Darśana outside of India, established regular assemblies and publications for teaching the darśana, and initiated formally educated youths as sadhus.

Yogī – An ascetic who practices yoga.

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